LA CROSSE WISCONSIN

OUR COMMUNITY

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Most Holy Father

The Franciscan Sisters who form the present community of the Convent of St Rose, La Crosse which has duly received the approbation of the ecclesiastical authority, humbly prostrate at the feet of Your Holiness beg the Apostolic Benediction and a Plenary Indulgence in articulo mortis

Sanctus Pontifex benigne annuit precibus
Dat. in Aedibus Vaticanis die 16 Februarii 1918
+ Joannes Baptista Nicolai Rom
Archiepiscopus Theodosiopolitanus

OUR COMMUNITY

THE ORIGIN
AND
THE DEVELOPMENT THROUGH SEVENTY YEARS

OF THE CONGREGATION OF THE SISTERS
OF THE THIRD ORDER OF ST. FRANCIS
OF THE PERPETUAL ADORATION,
LA CROSSE, WISCONSIN.
1849-1919

By a Member of the Community

St. Rose Convent, La Crosse, Wisconsin.
August 21, 1920.

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To Jesus
Dwelling Ever with Us in His Sacrament of Love,
Our Divine Host, Our Lowly Guest;

To Mary
Our Mother, Virgin Queen of Angels;

To St. Francis,
Our Seraphic Father,

This Volume Is Dedicated
Humbly, Lovingly, Gratefully.

1049

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FOREWORD

With holy joy and a deep sense of gratitude do I give my blessing to a work which I am convinced is to further in various ways the greater glory of God. I remember how the laying of the corner stone of St. Rose Convent at which I officiated only two months after my ordination seemed to me one of the greatest events of my life. But little did I realize what a joy and consolation was to be mine in years to come through the establishment and subsequent growth of our La Crosse Sisterhood, which, indeed, may well be likened to the mustard seed of which the Gospel speaks; for, truly, has it grown from a tiny seed to a mighty tree. To-day as I recall its humble beginning here in 1870, I cannot but exclaim: Verily, this is no other than the work of God!

When in 1878 the Perpetual Adoration was established here at St. Rose Convent, I felt as did every priest in the city, I am convinced, that this would be a source of blessing not alone for the Sisters themselves nor for those only who share directly in the fruit of their good works, but for the entire Diocese as well. And during the twenty-eight years that I have been personally charged with the responsibility of the Diocese, how often, dear Sisters, has the thought of the prayers offered for me during the Hours of Adoration been a consolation and a support! On this, the occasion of the Golden Jubilee of the establishment of your

Motherhouse in La Crosse, I wish to emphasize in a special manner, therefore, my appreciation of the petitions constantly poured forth in the Adoration Chapel. I know that many of these hours are kept by the good old Sisters who are no longer able to go out and labor directly in the classrooms, the orphanages, or hospitals. To you in particular I would say, "Be of good heart. Your work is hidden, but you are in a certain sense the very soul of the community, for I am convinced, my dear daughters, as I have told you on several occasions, that the chief source of your blessings is your devotion to Jesus in the Most Holy Sacrament. As long as this love burns brightly, the community will prosper; the heritage transmitted by the older members at the cost of so many sacrifices will be secure. And I know from personal experience that this love is glowing, that this fire is daily fed by your Hours of Adoration and your fervent visits to Jesus on His throne of grace. Thither on returning from your Missions you eagerly hasten; your Emmanuel, Jesus, is the first to be greeted; here on your departure for another year's work you lovingly linger and hence go forth to your labors with His choicest blessings. Here by your prayers you obtain graces for the living, strength and consolation for the dying, relief for the departed; and when comes your blessed turn to leave this vale of tears, how confidently your mind and your heart will revert to this Throne of Mercy. What a consolation in your last hour will be the prayers recited for you in your Adoration Chapel!"

I cannot permit this opportunity to pass without ex-

pressing also my appreciation of your labors during these fifty years in behalf of the orphans of this Diocese. The care and training given these poor children would elicit admiration even had you received any material reward, but since these services have been entirely gratuitous during all these years, they merit also the thanks of the entire Diocese. For this your charity God has doubtless blest you superabundantly. That He may continue to bless you in future is my earnest prayer.

To each and every one of you, my hundreds of religious daughters, to the various labors in which you are engaged, and to this little volume which I have every reason to believe will in days to come be an inspiration to all who read its pages, I heartily give my blessing.

Devotedly yours in Christ,

+ James Schwebach
Bishop of La Crosse.

OUR COMMUNITY

CHAPTER I

FOUNDING OF A NEW COMMUNITY OF THE THIRD ORDER OF ST. FRANCIS IN AMERICA

Before perusing this simple tale of a wonderful work of God's goodness, refer, dear reader, to a map of Europe and trace on it a voyage up the Danube River in search of a cluster of workshops and trim little homes known as Kaufbeuren. Follow the great stream up its long, winding course into the fertile little state of Bavaria, quite in the heart of western Europe. The lofty Alps, far in the distance to your left, beckon you southward. Proceeding in this direction from the waters of the Danube, up the Lech River for some time, you will come upon the city of Augsburg. At this point, the Lech branches off into the Wertach River. Now cruise leisurely up this chattering stream for an hour or more, enjoy the varied scenes of the beautiful highland valley, and — behold! at length, the old manufacturing town of Kaufbeuren, nestling on the high, rocky left bank of the river, peeps out as you approach, like a brood of wondering eaglets from their eyrie.

It numbers at present about nine thousand inhabitants, and is interesting enough in itself, yet, among the world's centers of bustling progress, quite insignificant. True, its anvils have been ringing, and its quaintly fashioned looms have been humming their song for centuries, and yet it is allowed only a dot on the map of Europe. We find here, nevertheless, the

birthplace of a momentous design of Divine Providence, the story of which fills the pages of this humble volume.

The first scene in this narrative is laid in the late forties of the nineteenth century; the first actors are six gifted young women of Kaufbeuren, who had banded together to discuss the possibility of a rather venturesome enterprise. The outcome of their deliberations was a bold resolution to cross the Atlantic, to America, and there found a religious community of the Third Order Regular of St. Francis. Surely a novel idea, and undoubtedly inspired from on high; for nowhere are we told of a band of seculars coming, uninvited and unannounced to pioneer America, not only to organize there but also personally to constitute the nucleus of a new religious community. Well must these chosen souls have understood the call of God: "Harken, O daughter, and see, and incline thy ear, and forget thy people and thy father's house."

But in what part of that fabled, far-off land, with its vast stretches of wilderness and tribes of wandering Indians, should they locate? Where could they hope to find conditions favorable to their plans and to the success of their strange undertaking? Their choice fell on our present state of Wisconsin. Why on this section rather than on some more promising portion of the American continent? We cannot vouch a definite answer, but the following may be said by way of explanation: In those early days, 1848, only sixty-five years after the homeless, trackless wilds had been added to the Union through the Conquest of the Great Northwest Territory by the gallant George Rogers Clark, Wisconsin was just entering upon her statehood, and hundreds of sturdy Catholic immigrants had found shelter within her borders. A number of zealous priests

MOST REV. J. M. HENNI, D. D.

were already attending assiduously to the spiritual needs of their scattered flocks, and they were fast establishing parishes and missions. These parishes and missions were in 1844 formed into a diocese, under the jurisdiction of Wisconsin's first resident bishop, the Right Reverend John Martin Henni, a Swiss by birth. His episcopal see was Milwaukee, a city which had grown in an incredibly short time from a barren wilderness to a flourishing center of some seven thousand inhabitants.

Previous to his consecration, Bishop Henni had labored untiringly as missionary priest. His zeal for the colonization of Ohio, and later, also of Wisconsin, by Catholic families, knew no bounds. In the interest of this cause, he edited and distributed pamphlets and periodicals. He visited Europe several times, Germany in particular, everywhere exhorting, in glowing terms, priests and laity to emigrate to his "Land of Promise." The fame of his name and enterprise was thus spread far and wide, and could not fail to find a responsive echo in our little Kaufbeuren. The good Bishop at length so fascinated the minds of many of his hearers by the charm of his eloquence and the sincerity of his purpose, that, animated by visionary prospects very similar to those which had prompted the Spaniards to seek their El Dorado in South America, they set out for Wisconsin.

We smile at the idea. Yet a spiritual El Dorado Wisconsin did become for great numbers of God-directed souls; for hither came our band of Bavarian heroines to lay the corner stone of a new community of Franciscan Sisters, which struggled hard and long for an existence, but which finally grew and prospered wonderfully under heavenly benedictions.

The names of the good women thus singularly in-

strumental in the designs of God were, Miss Ottilia Duerr, Miss Crescentia Eberle, Miss Anna Ritter, Miss Teresa Moser, Miss Maria Eisenschmied, Miss Marie Saumweber. These women were daughters of refined homes, fairly well educated, and also financially well situated. They were somewhat advanced in age, ranging between thirty and forty years, excepting Miss Duerr who was still in her middle twenties. They were, above all, deeply religious, the one desire of their hearts being to strive earnestly after Christian perfection by the observance of the simple vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience in a religious community devoted to works of charity in schools, orphanages, deaf-mute asylums, and hospitals; and having, besides, as one of its special objects, the Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament. All had previously become secular Tertiaries, hence, their preference for the Order of St. Francis. Brave and strong of heart, they were endowed with an uncommon degree of good judgment and thrifty habits, which may be inferred from the clever manner in which they set about equipping themselves, and making the necessary provisions for their new mode of life.

For instance, Miss Duerr, the youngest of the group, spent a year in the novitiate of a local convent of Franciscan Sisters, that she might thus become familiar with the requirements and practices of religious community life. To perfect herself in the culinary art, Miss Moser engaged as cook in the kitchen of a family of the nobility; to acquire facility in practical housekeeping, Miss Eberle entered the employ of a peasant family; while Miss Ritter took a special course in sewing. Thus, by arduous application and fervent prayer, they prepared themselves for their holy calling.

To this personal preparation they added prudent

foresight. The new country was sparsely peopled. Would it be possible to secure help to do the heavy work? Who would fell the trees, build the convent, manage the farm, and till the soil? But here, too, our friends were equal to their task. They won for their cause four brother Tertiaries who declared themselves willing to bid adieu to home and country for the love of God and the salvation of souls.

These four Brothers, as they were called, were men of honor and virtue. They likewise began at once to fit themselves for their new calling. Brother Anthony Zahler engaged as carpenter, Brother Joseph Suess became a gardener, Brother William Reder, a shoemaker, while Brother Leo Bernard applied himself to general home management.

The greatest good fortune, however, came to our devoted friends when two priests, Reverend Anthony Keppler, a pastor of a local parish, and his assistant, Reverend Matthias Steiger, offered to espouse their cause and accompany them to the land of their sacred hopes and longings. How wonderful the ways of Divine Providence as here manifested! Only the sublimest motives, born of prayer and zeal for God's glory, could have prompted these worthy priests to support an undertaking so peculiarly doubtful.

No sooner had Miss Duerr completed her training when the final arrangements for emigration were made. Naturally, each one of the party was solicitous to procure her inheritance and whatever other money might be due her. Legal proceedings in this matter required, as usual, some time; but finally, by the sixth of March, 1849, all the preparations for emigration were completed. Provided with a recommendation from the Bishop of Augsburg, our heroic band resolutely broke the ties of kinship and country, and sought an Atlantic

harbor. Let us bid them a fond Godspeed and draw a veil over the scenes of the next five weeks, for tradition has left us no record of that long, weary voyage and subsequent landing in America.

Shortly after Easter, which that year fell on April 8, our intrepid little company arrived in Milwaukee. Imagine their joy on finding themselves at last on the scene of their hopeful dreams, and also the feeling of extreme loneliness which stole upon them and threatened to paralyze their courage for the moment. From the heart of civilized and cultured Europe they had come to the heart of the American wilderness, with neither friend to bid them welcome nor roof to give them shelter.

But, nothing daunted, they rapped at the door of Bishop Henni, only to discover that the prelate was not at home. He had but recently returned to the States from one of his missionary visits to Europe, and was still tarrying at Baltimore, waiting to attend a council of the American Bishops. Since this council was not to convene for its week's session before the fourth Sunday after Easter, His Lordship could not be expected home for a number of weeks. There was, consequently, no alternative for our weary wanderers but to direct their steps to the neighboring parish of Franklin, where the vicar-general, Father Kundig, resided, and remain there for the time being.

Bishop Henni finally returned to Milwaukee, some days before Pentecost. They lost no time in calling on him, told him of their intentions, and begged him to accept their services for the welfare of his diocese. The good prelate received them graciously, favored their plans, and directed them to build their convent in the southern inlet of Milwaukee Bay, at the place so familiar at the present day as St. Francis, then known

only under the Indian term "Noioshing,"—pronounced "no-yosh-ing," and meaning a narrow strip, or tongue, of land extending into the water. Complying with the Bishop's request, our little company, characterized from the first by admirable steadfastness of purpose, bought thirty-eight acres of land, and resided temporarily in the dilapidated buildings which they found on the place.

But spring had glided into summer, and the newcomers must needs build their convent before winter should surprise them in their airy shelters. The task evidently brooked no delay, and it would be far easier to imagine than to describe their consequent busy life during that summer of 1849. Who does not detect here a company of veritable "forty-niners," building a true San Francisco, and opening an inexhaustible gold mine for Heaven, far more precious than the rich deposits of glittering metal so eagerly sought by the "forty-niners" of California?

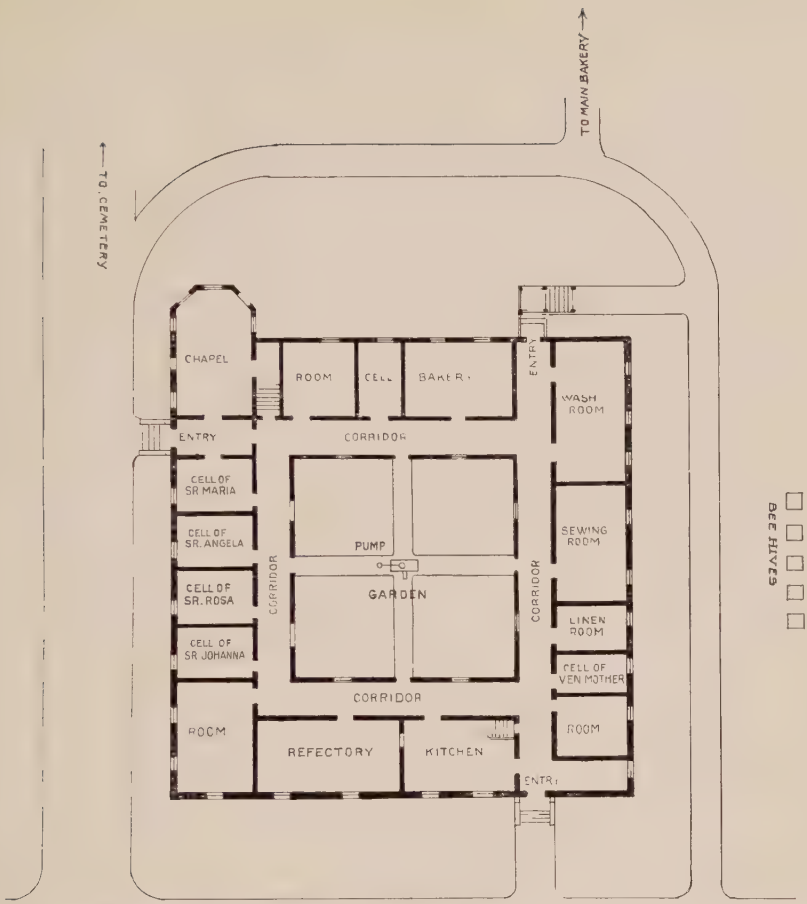
The good Brothers labored untiringly from morning till night, building one of the first convents in the wilds of the Central Northwest. Nor can we presume that the future dwellers of this primitive little cloister could merely look on in happy anticipation. They, too, must lend a helping hand in the good work. Gladly they carried building material, tacked on the brushwood used in lieu of laths, and even rooted out tree stumps. Truly, these heroines were watering with the sweat of their brow the seed which was to grow into a hardy tree, in the shelter of which the Eucharistic God would vouchsafe to dwell and be worshipped in Perpetual Adoration.

This blessed future, however, was hidden from these good women, and the novelty of the work having worn off, its weary strain often sorely tried, but, we are glad

to say, never broke their trustful courage. When finally the autumn sun dyed hill and dale in glowing hues, its mellow rays fell like a benediction of heaven on the little convent which stood, in all its simplicity, ready for occupancy. Though rudely built, and but a temporary shelter at best, it cannot fail to engage our interest. It was a one-story frame building, sixteen feet high and about twenty feet wide, completely inclosing a court thirty-five feet square. A chapel surmounted by spire and cross formed one of the corners. Two walks crossed each other at right angles, dividing the court within into four equal garden-patches; while a well in the crossing of the walks amply served all their household needs. The building was partitioned off as shown in the ground plan. The windows opened on hinges, to the inside; and a fairly wide corridor entirely flanked the enclosed court.

A little later, a dwelling for the priests and Brothers was built at some distance from the Convent. As a crowning touch to their good work, they reverently fixed in the chapel tower an iron-tongued monitor, named St. Clara, which was piously blessed by Father Steiger. How its first notes sounding forth in sweetest accents must have thrilled the hearts of the pious listeners!

Ah, swing and ring, dear convent bell!
Thou must have pealed with magic art
O'er lake and strand and plain and dell
To touch so deep each listening heart.
Didst thou the past review? Pray tell,
Or just the present gild in light?
Or gaze with prophet's eye, dear bell,
Into a future very bright? —
Thou wilt not tell, dear convent bell?
Then why should I thy secrets tell?



GROUND PLAN OF THE ORIGINAL ST. FRANCIS ASSISI CONVENT ST. FRANCIS, WIS.

RELIGIOUS DRESS WORN BY THE FIRST SISTERS

CHAPTER II

THE FIRST RELIGIOUS INVESTITURE AND PROFESSION

With grateful hearts, these devoted women moved into their newly-built home in the autumn of 1849. Now at last they lived in a Convent! And this Convent was all their own! What a happy realization of one of their pious, hopeful dreams! They understood, nevertheless, that this rare good fortune did not yet constitute them a religious congregation. With prayerful longing, they looked forward, therefore, to the day of their investiture with the religious habit, and also to that other day of days on which they might finally consecrate themselves to God by the three vows of religion. Nor were they unmindful of the grave fact that they still had no rules by which to direct and regulate their lives. How much it does mean to organize a religious community with no religious to begin with! Our friends had made a heroic beginning, however, and now pressed resolutely on as God's own instruments in a great work.

They were not long in devising a religious garb. This consisted of a black habit, a black cape with a white turnover collar, a black leather belt, and a Franciscan cord worn under the habit. A black bonnet with broad black ties and a full black ruche formed the head dress. In the course of time, the white turnover collar was replaced by a small guimpe, patterned after that of the Sisters of the Visitation, except that it was closed in front by a row of small buttons.

With this neatly-fashioned costume, our worthy as-

pirants were invested by Fathers Keppler and Steiger in 1850, the year following their arrival and installation at St. Francis.

Miss Duerr received the name of Sister Aemiliana; Miss Eberle, Sister Frances; Miss Ritter, Sister Johanna; Miss Moser, Sister Angela; Miss Eisenschmied, Sister Clara; and Miss Saumweber, Sister Margaret. Smiling through their tears, full of wonder at the Divine Goodness, the newly-received novices left the chapel to attend to their various avocations. They had entered at last upon the religious life.

By common consent, Sister Aemiliana Duerr was called Venerable Mother, because she had gone through a year's novitiate training in Europe. In truth, however, each of this little band was but a probationer, with scarcely a comprehensive grasp of the lofty significance of religious life, and with neither mother nor mistress to direct or to try her. They walked blindfolded, as it were, in paths they did not know, entrusting the forming of their spirit and habits as religious to Providence. They were in good faith, however, and unhesitatingly outlined a few simple rules for themselves. According to these, the hours of the day were allotted to prayer and labor. The Little Office of the Blessed Virgin was recited, and the ordinary devotions were held in common at various intervals of the day. The intervening time was scarcely sufficient for the usual household duties and the various outdoor employments.

Picture these first Sisters in the laundry reciting the rosary aloud while working, or on the little farm felling trees, cutting timber, rooting up stumps, clearing the land, sowing the seed, and garnering the crops. This heavy outdoor work taxed the physical strength and endurance of our brave Sisters to the utmost and,

at times, their courage and constancy almost failed them. But, like the swallows who feed while flying, they also found much to gladden their hearts in the performance of these duties. Their little Convent home stood in an atmosphere of rural freshness and beauty; and sweet it was to hear the cooling breezes rustle through the high tree tops, and the waves of beautiful Lake Michigan lapping against the quiet strand. How enjoyable did the Sisters find the dewy mornings, the sunny noondays, the balmy evenings, and the starry nights! The ever-changing beauties of nature, as the seasons glided by, cast a holy charm about their lives, and their exulting hearts sang with the Royal Psalmist: "I have a goodly heritage; my lot has fallen unto me in pleasant places."

Some of these pioneer nuns, indeed, thought these outdoor tasks, though at times embarrassing, quite in keeping with their austere idea of humility. Emulating their Seraphic Father, they termed it "holy joy" to be accounted as ignorant and stupid. They found their laborious manner of living, therefore, quite tolerable and even enjoyable. Still we must not think that they had been wholly unconcerned about the prospects of the future all this while. Work as they might, their small area of tillable soil would not produce sufficient for the maintenance of so many; whereas, the expenses incurred by the voyage, building, and living, told hard on their purse. Worst of all, there were no prospects of any remunerative employment. And only now did the tried little community wake up to the startling fact that it would soon stand hopeless while want entered its door. How could it escape the threatening doom? Go begging? No. Dissolve and disperse? What a dreadful shattering of all its dearest hopes such a step would mean!

To relieve the straitened circumstances of the Sisters, Father Steiger, who had been appointed assistant priest in a neighboring parish, procured for them charge of the parish school; and Sister Johanna Ritter became the teacher. Father Keppler, who had recently become pastor of a parish near by, entrusted his school to Mother Aemiliana Duerr. The meager salary thus realized by the two teaching Sisters afforded but slight relief, and the Sisters continued to suffer keenly for want of the necessaries of life. Nor was the measure of their trials yet full. Like a clap of thunder from out a clear sky, came the sudden death of the worthy Father Keppler. The good priest had preached an eloquent sermon in honor of the Blessed Virgin on the morning of the eighth of September. Towards evening he took sick of the cholera, and before the dawn of the next day, he was no more. His parishioners bore him in mournful funeral procession to the grief-stricken community and he was buried near the Convent. On the very day following the burial of his lamented friend, Father Steiger also succumbed to the terrible epidemic.

What blighting disasters were these for the nascent community which now stood alone and orphaned! Could it really recover from such a shattering blow? The two schools had to be given up, and with them the only source of income. Only now and then could a priest from one of the neighboring parishes come to the Convent to attend to the spiritual needs of the Sisters. On Sundays, rain or shine, all of them walked five miles to Milwaukee to assist at Holy Mass.

The good Bishop Henni, however, encouraged the Sisters not to disband; and, whenever possible, he sent a priest once a week to administer the Sacraments and offer Holy Mass. Thus for a whole year, the community struggled on amidst the ever-thickening gloom. But

God, meanwhile, as in the days of Saul, had sought out another David to watch over His little Israel and defend it against the assaults of Goliath. This chosen David, destined to become a savior to the little Sisterhood, was no other than Father Michael Heiss; and, as the sequel will prove, the very event which for the moment imperilled the flickering life of the infant community became, in the Providence of God, the source of its preservation and subsequent growth.

With his keen mind and accurate judgment, Father Heiss saw at once that the first thing to be done for the Sisters was to furnish them with better means of support and a suitable sphere of action if they were to be a religious community in the true sense of the term. The good priest, therefore, earnestly set about formulating plans toward this end. What these plans were, we shall presently see.

During a recent sojourn in Europe, for the purpose of recuperating his health, Father Heiss had been confessor in a community of Notre Dame Sisters and also in a convent of the Visitation Nuns. This afforded him ample opportunity to familiarize himself with the rules and customs of these exemplary Sisterhoods. The experience thus acquired served him in good stead now. He formulated a set of rules for the Sisters very much like that observed at present in most religious communities, except that the time fixed for rising was somewhat earlier — 4:15 A. M.

The little bell, St. Clara, cheerily announced the time for the various devotions. Those Sisters who wished to devote themselves to prayer and meditation after evening devotions might do so in their cells. But was it not too cold for these nightly vigils during the winter months? In this regard, we are glad to say that the sleeping apartments were heated to some extent by a

few box stoves set up in different parts of the adjoining corridor. Some of the cells, therefore, could be fairly well heated by leaving the doors open; while other cells at a greater distance from a stove were nicely warmed by a goodly length of stove pipe running through them. Those Sisters sleeping in a cell near a stove were naturally expected to keep up the fire. Speaking of this arrangement in later years, good Sister Bridget once naïvely remarked: "The one had the care of the fire, and the other had the good of it." Thursdays were days of recreation; and Fridays, days of silence. But outside of these specified days, there was little thought of either recreation or silence, owing to the pressure and nature of their employments.

Naturally, Father Heiss had quite a time initiating his crude little band into the religious life. They had an admirably good will, and really meant to be docile; but being of an age at which the character is already formed and set habits have been acquired, they were not so apt and tractable as might be desired. But by long persevering and patient efforts, the good Father did succeed in training his charges to harmonize their ideas with the correct principles of religious life; and after a rather long probation, he finally, on June 16, 1853, admitted them, with the sanction of Bishop Henni, to the profession of the three vows for one year. This was just three years after their reception into the novitiate. With this event, the coveted goal was reached, and thus the new community was formally established.

Before long, several pious girls applied for admission as postulants. The first of these who had the courage to rap at the humble Convent door was Mary Spicker, later Sister Antonia, and Catherine Selos, who became Sister Teresa. Both entered upon their novitiate,

August 2, 1855, and were admitted to the profession of their vows a year later. The event was undoubtedly a memorable one, and the sorely-tried little band of founders must have felt somewhat on this occasion as did our holy Father St. Francis, when, before the altar in his beloved Portiuncula, under habit and veil and vows, he hid away the noble Lady Clare, the first of his legions of holy daughters.

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CHAPTER III

ST. AEMILIAN'S ORPHANAGE AND THE MANAGEMENT OF ST. FRANCIS SEMINARY

As remarked in the preceding chapter, Father Heiss was most solicitous to provide his destitute little community with suitable employment as a means of support. And again, Providence was admirably kind to our Sisters. It was not uncommon in those days to find cholera and other epidemics rage like destroying angels among the poor immigrants, leaving the dead and the orphaned in their wake. With paternal solicitude, Bishop Henni gathered the children of his diocese thus bereft into an asylum established at Milwaukee as early as 1850. This orphan home was fast becoming too small to accommodate the increasing number of children, and there was serious thought of erecting a separate house for the boys. The Waisen-Verein, a local organization established in the interest of destitute children, took up the problem, and in 1854, built St. Aemilian's Orphan Home for boys at St. Francis. Father Heiss petitioned Bishop Henni to entrust the care of the new institution to our little Franciscan Community. His Lordship acquiesced, and our dear Sisters were soon right at home in the midst of a group of poor little orphans. Were not the poor nuns beginning now to realize one of the principal aims that had lured them to the American wilds? The new work was well adapted to their zeal and taste, and requited them, besides, with a fairly good salary furnished by the Waisen-Verein.

It is needless to say that the Sisters entered earnestly

upon their new duties, and the forlorn little children returned in rich measure their motherly love and care. Mother Aemiliana and Sister Frances, in particular, were greatly beloved for their amiable traits and goodness of heart. They were the first teachers in the asylum; and they helped to fill each day with profit and pleasure for the little ones. Bishop Henni and the whole diocese were pleased with the progress of the new institution, and spoke very encouragingly of the wonders these devoted Sisters accomplished.

Before long, still another field of labor beckoned and promised much to the little community. It certainly meant a great deal for God's glory. And what was this new field so brightly illumined by the smile of God's good pleasure? We shall see presently, after having first considered a few interesting preliminaries.

Who has not pondered these touching words of our dear Savior: "The harvest is great, but the laborers are few"? This plaint, coming from the depth of the loving Heart of Jesus, has been echoed and re-echoed down the centuries, drawing into the Lord's vineyard a multitude of worthy laborers; and among these are numbered the zealous Bishop Henni and his devoted priests.

What loftier ambition, therefore, could be entertained than to rear in pioneer Wisconsin an institution in which young men might be prepared for the sacred ministry? And thus it eventually came to pass that on a sunny day of July, 1853, Father Heiss and Doctor Salzmann, with the approval of Bishop Henni, bought forty-eight acres of land on which to establish a seminary for priests. The land was adjacent to the property of the Franciscan Convent, and the cause of the new enterprise being so sublime, Father Heiss conjectured that the Sisters might be willing to add their thirty-eight acres to the new purchase. He did not miscal-

culate. With whole-souled generosity, the little community relinquished its claim to the land in favor of the new establishment.

Meanwhile, that memorable July, 1853, had lapsed into August, and the Sisters were celebrating the Feast of the Portiuncula with due solemnity, when suddenly a stately carriage stopped at the door of their humble cloister. And the occupants were no others than the Papal Nuncio, Archbishop Bedini (later Cardinal), the famous Archbishop Hughes of New York, and our own good Bishop Henni. The new cathedral of Milwaukee had just been consecrated; and the celebration, at which the Papal Nuncio officiated, had drawn to the Central Northwest these distinguished Eastern visitors. Bishop Henni had proudly induced them to visit our little village of St. Francis and reconnoiter the location for the new seminary. Father Heiss bade them a glad welcome, and with his usual warm courtesy led the way over a small bridge spanning Deer Creek, to the thickly-wooded site of the future institution. The grounds lay about six hundred feet distant from the lake. Sloping gently toward the great sheet of water, they commanded a most wonderful view. Truly, a more ideal location could not have been chosen for the purpose. Far removed from the turmoil and distractions of the city, the young aspirant to the holy priesthood might here abide undisturbed, pursuing his studies, enjoying the exhilarating freshness of the forest, or walking in solitude with the Master on the shore. Overpowered by the inspiration of the moment, the venerable Archbishop Bedini exclaimed, "Make this spot sacred, Bishop Henni!"

And truly sacred the spot was made before our spinning globe could carry it even thrice more around the sun. Clergy, Sisters, Brothers, laity — all united their

efforts to achieve the coveted end. Bishop Henni everywhere encouraged and urged on the good work. Again and again, he would exclaim, with eyes and hands raised toward Heaven, "Thank God, thank God, for the beginning of this great work, and for the good priests He has given me!" The very hub of this busy stir was Doctor Salzmann. This zealous priest, an Austrian by birth, was distinguished for remarkable brilliancy of mind and great strength of character. With undaunted courage, he toured the towns, villages, and wilds near and far, everywhere advocating the cause of the seminary with burning eloquence, and collecting the much-needed funds. What a task in those pioneer days, when travel was difficult and money scarce, for one reared amid surroundings of comfort and culture! And when in spite of his arduous efforts, the seminary was frequently not unlike the house of the widow of Sarepta, no wonder Doctor Salzmann reached the conclusion that our struggling little community should admit no more members than were necessary for the work at the seminary.

The Sisters cooked for all, even for the working men, and gladly did whatever willing hands and generous hearts could do. The Brothers made the bricks used to rear the noble four-story edifice, measuring one hundred and sixty feet in length and fifty feet in width. They also hauled the timber, which came by way of the lake, did carpenter work, and contributed in countless other ways toward the great undertaking. Father Heiss was general supervisor, and he opened the first semester of the future seminary by preparing for Holy Orders three theologians who lodged in the Brothers' house. At length, despite the scores of vexing delays, the new building stood completed. It was the first institution of its kind in the Central Northwest, and

was solemnly dedicated on the Feast of St. Francis de Sales, January 29, 1856.

Doctor Salzmann wished to name the new Seminary Petro-Paulinum. Bishop Henni, however, like another Zachary, said: "St. Francis shall be its name." Why did the good Bishop insist on having this name in preference to any other? In 1848, the young prelate had visited Annecy, the birthplace of St. Francis de Sales. Here, kneeling before the altar containing the remains of the great Bishop of Geneva, he fervently begged the blessing of Heaven upon his young but promising diocese. At that moment, a priest approached and handed him a small receptacle containing a relic of the Saint. Joyfully venerating the precious gift, Bishop Henni, then and there, vowed that he would build a seminary for priests and name it in honor of St. Francis de Sales, should God provide the necessary means. Accordingly, the new institution was now named Salesianum, later known as St. Francis Seminary, especially in recent years. The name of the place, too, was changed to St. Francis.

Doctor Salzmann's absence, for reasons previously explained, imposed a double share of work on Father Heiss, the Rector, who at such times would conduct in perplexing combinations classes in theology, philosophy, Greek, mathematics, and physics. How close must have been his application to guide and rule and teach under such trying conditions! We are told that at night the light in his study was rarely extinguished until long after the inmates of the institution — except perhaps the Sisters — were wrapped in deep slumber; and before five o'clock the next morning, the tireless priest was again up and away, in fair or foul weather, to the Convent Chapel to offer Holy Mass. Seven o'clock found him again at the Salesianum where he

promptly opened the program for the well-filled hours of a long day.

We are here guilty of digressing somewhat from our subject, but not without reason, for the interests of the Salesianum and those of our beloved community must some sad day later on work out their own ways apart.

To return to our subject, the opening of the Salesianum brought the Sisters into a new sphere of employment; namely, the housekeeping of the institution. This charge was by no means a fascinating or an easy one; it presented rather a very rugged, uphill path of duty. Love of God and zeal for the salvation of immortal souls, however, refreshed them on this weary way as with the breath of morning, — at least at the beginning. Those simple-hearted, zealous nuns at St. Francis knew at the time of no sublimer work than that of co-operating by their labors in the training of priests for the sacred ministry, thereby becoming co-laborers, as it were, with these priests in their subsequent apostolic labors for the glory of God.

But in spite of the Sisters' good will, the burden of labor and exertion gradually increased to such a degree as to become well-nigh insupportable; and the new members that entered merely filled the vacant places of those who had gone down in the struggle — a very natural consequence that could be easily foreseen. For, should one expect to find in our American girls that marvelous spirit of austerity and that unequaled tenacity of purpose which characterized the founders? Hardly, except in a rare few. As a consequence, nearly all the heavy work fell to the lot of the older Sisters. Aside from this, it must be admitted that these elder Sisters could not graciously adapt themselves to many of the American ideas and customs. Such a painful condition of affairs could neither engender confidence be-

tween the respective classes of community members nor contribute toward that harmonious co-operation so essential to their success in common.

Mother Aemiliana, however, fortunately combined with her tender womanly sympathies a generous amount of good sense and a sort of martial courage. With determination unyielding, she pushed ever on, always and everywhere taking the lead, and reserving the hardest tasks for herself, well knowing that her American daughters were really physically unfit for such arduous duties. No task was too menial or too hard for her, since it contributed so manifestly toward the spread of God's kingdom.

Let us observe a few moments this remarkable woman. She is of medium stature. Her spiritual face with its high, broad forehead, soft gray eyes, large clear-cut nose, and firmly-set mouth and chin, betoken high intelligence and strong personality. Behold this solicitous Mother at one time superintending in her beloved St. Aemilian's Orphanage; at another, managing the Convent affairs; and then again, entrusting the superiorship of the community to Sister Johanna Ritter, and hastening to the Seminary there to bring order out of chaos; only to turn about and find things out of sorts in the Convent. Poor Sister Johanna, though well educated, was not gifted with household management, and could, therefore, neither counsel nor assist the Sisters. So back home Mother Aemiliana went, and soon all was well again within the cloister precincts.

The baking of bread almost daily was, perhaps, the hardest and most trying task connected with the Seminary; and many were the embarrassing experiences of the Sisters in charge of the bakery. Imagine, for instance, the laborious task of thoroughly mixing the con-

tents of two or three hundred pounds of flour with four or five pails of water, — such was the size of the usual batch of bread — to say nothing of kneading, forming it into loaves, and baking it. The "laundry days" were scarcely less wasteful of the Sisters' energies. These days began shortly after midnight and continued deep into the succeeding night. The Sisters' poor fingers would scarcely heal from one washday to the next, and it was no uncommon occurrence for a weary worker to drop, through sheer exhaustion, across her tub in death-like slumber.

The long weary days of drudgery came and went in relentless succession. Many an evening of these trying days found the poor Sisters entirely succumbed to extreme exhaustion, as may be inferred from a pathetic incident mirthfully told in after years by Sister Rose Francois. "One evening," related this dear Sister, "I, too, wished to pray for a time in my cell before going to bed. I was very sincere about it and began my prayer kneeling on the floor with widely outstretched arms as did dear St. Francis, our Father. I know that my prayer was begun, but not finished. Can anyone tell what happened to me on that evening? — Neither can I. When the bell sounded the signal for rising at 4:15 the next morning, I awoke to find myself lying prostrate on the floor. Springing quickly to my feet I was puzzled for a moment on discovering myself, as well as my bed, already dressed. Suddenly the whole truth dawned upon me, and, smiling to myself, I hastily washed face and hands, readjusted my apparel, and hurried to the chapel, glad to be the first one there."

While the young community was thus wrestling with its hard lot, there came to its portals one day in September, 1859, Mary Crescentia Herb, née Leinfelder,

begging admittance. This notable postulant was destined, in the Providence of God, to bear the community triumphantly through all its difficulties, and finally to gather it around the Tabernacle in Perpetual Adoration. But before the dawn of that glorious epoch, our beloved Sisterhood was to weep bitterly, like Jeremiah, over the ruins of a deserted city.

CHAPTER IV

MOTHER AEMILIANA AND HER FIVE ORIGINAL COMPANIONS WITHDRAW FROM THE COMMUNITY

No one who had witnessed the heroic attitude of Mother Aemiliana and her first five companions during those eleven long years of hardship and trial, could have doubted, even for a moment, their intense sincerity of purpose. That these noble souls should have been all the while greatly disappointed in the ultimate outcome of their designs, was but natural. Even an ordinary imagination can readily divine their feelings. Not thus had they in the days of their hopeful planning portrayed their new Franciscan community. Where was that life of prayer and union with God so ardently sought? Where were the prospects for works of charity among Christ's little ones or at the sick bed in hospitals? Where, in fine, were those hours of adoration before the Blessed Sacrament so lovingly anticipated? Were all their fondly-laid plans to come to naught? Had they only dreamed a dream in the far-off, happy homes of their girlhood?

Thus it seemed; for had not the ever-increasing amount of their daily manual labor rendered prayer and recollection, if not altogether impossible, at least of only secondary importance, though these are the very essence of religious life? Above all, the impoverished and dependent condition of the community excluded even the hope of attaining to anything better in the future. Aside from this, the strained relations between the Sisters who came from Europe and those

of American birth, held in painful fetters, as it were, the very spirit of the religious body. The primitive little Convent, too, was dilapidated beyond repair, and afforded the poor Sisters but miserable shelter against the inclemencies of the seasons. All these, we must own, were striking realities fit to crush the courage of even these brave souls. They told with cruel force upon our beloved founders, particularly Mother Aemiliana; and at last we behold this hitherto valiant woman standing mute, powerless in the face of these great difficulties.

The sad condition of affairs was finally brought to a sudden climax by Father Leonard Batz, one of the professors at the Seminary, who was also the chaplain of the community for two years, and later on was entrusted with the pastorate of St. Mary's Church, Milwaukee. Seeing how far removed the life of the little community was from that led by the more contemplative Sisterhoods of European countries, and forgetting that the pioneer conditions then existing in the United States, precluded even the possibility of such a life, he advised the six original members to withdraw from the congregation they had founded and apply for admission into one of the old, firmly established communities of Europe. Naturally, we should expect these founders to be guided by the advice of their director; and, thoroughly discouraged by him in regard to the religious life they were leading, they made due preparations for carrying out his directions. A little later, therefore, Mother Aemiliana with her four remaining original companions and a novice, apprised the Seminary faculty of their resolution to leave the Convent, requesting at the same time that their loan of a thousand dollars which had been expended in the building of the Seminary be returned to them. The Father Rector and his

associate professors were amazed and alarmed. In vain they tried to dissuade the Sisters from their purpose. Brother Anthony, their administrator, was dumbfounded on hearing of the matter.

But no, if the little band had at one time so resolutely laid and matured plans for the establishment of their religious career, they now just as resolutely prepared to abandon it. Every detail had been prearranged — the change of dress, the hour and manner of departure, and the destination. The poor Father Rector absented himself from St. Francis on that sadly memorable May evening of 1860, so that he might see nothing of the proceeding. And it was well for him to do so, for the scene enacted was, indeed, touchingly pathetic. In the quiet of the cloister cell, the sacred garb, once so fondly cherished, was exchanged for simple secular attire. Was it done with unbidden tears? God knows. But there were floods of tears without these silent chambers where the remnant of the family had gathered to await the inevitable. Can we picture this forlorn little group? Let us join them. But listen! Is that Mother Aemiliana calling? At the sound of the familiar voice, each pair of tear-dimmed eyes kindles as with a ray of sudden hope. Has the dear Mother, perhaps, repented of her resolution? No — she merely wishes to see one of the postulants; and this postulant, the second last in the order of admission, is Mary Crescentia Herb. Let us follow her into the room.

Can it be that the deserting Mother is for a moment gifted with prophetic insight of the future? We know not. With the air of one who had begun a work dear to her heart, but who feels that the execution of it must be left to another, Mother Aemiliana, gazing upon the young woman before her said solemnly: "Behold this holy garb, my child — You will soon don it. It was

dear to me — I tried my best to establish the community upon a safe footing and to instill into it a truly religious spirit; but failed. God grant that you may succeed." Then she and her companions passed resolutely out into the night. The pitiful grief and loud sobs, borne after her on the quiet evening breezes, seemed to plead in touching appeal:

"Come! and gaze on our face once more,
Bring us the smiles of the olden days;
Come and shine in your place once more,
And change the dark into golden days. —
Gone! Gone! Gone! Joy is fled from us,
Gone into the night of the nevermore,
And darkness rests where you shed for us
A light we shall miss forevermore."

What an appalling event, this breaking away of the founders from the helpless young Sisterhood! Our hearts go out in deepest sympathy to the poor bereft ones. Behold them overwhelmed with grief! The guardian angels of the community must be hovering nigh; and in pity, therefore, let us drop the curtain gently over all. Assuredly, this all forms a profound enigma, such as Divine Providence only can fully understand. Shall we attempt to fathom it? That would be presumptuous. But we cannot refrain from at least conjecturing its meaning:

Those first six Sisters were, beyond doubt, the chosen instruments of God in a great work, and as such, must have been exceedingly dear to His loving Heart. But why should these founders merely begin the great work, and then, having borne the brunt of the stupendous trials and difficulties connected with the undertaking, forsake it just when their ever willing hands and stout hearts were most needed? They were un-

questionably well endowed with precisely those qualities necessary for launching the new community; but were they equally well qualified to pilot it through the high sea of prosperity and into the haven of final rest? Or, could we of the present generation, think you, have reconciled ourselves graciously to their peculiar customs and views, many of which were not only impracticable in this country, but were almost as firmly set as are our hills and mountains?

Conjecture as we may, we cannot consider the withdrawal of the six founders a cowardly desertion, but rather a wise interposition of Divine Providence. Their names still live in veneration, and an undying tribute to their memory is the wondrous outgrowth of their ardent first efforts; namely, the two flourishing Sisterhoods at La Crosse and at St. Francis, two wide-spread eagle wings on which a multitude of religious souls may mount heavenward to join, we trust, their departed founders in an eternal adoration of the unveiled Mystery of our Tabernacles.

Let us, however, return once more to the scenes of that sad May evening of 1860. Mother Aemiliana and her companions, on arriving in Milwaukee, took up their abode in a small cottage in Father Batz's parish, near St. Mary's Church, until, as they expected, a letter should come from a certain Convent in Europe, where they had applied for admission. The letter came, but it contained a refusal, on the ground that the applicants were too far advanced in years. Disappointed again, the little band subsequently remained under Father Batz's direction, residing for some years near St. Mary's Church. And, indeed, these good women henceforth led very solitary, penitential lives. Besides doing the housekeeping for Father Batz, they also performed the services of sacristan and janitor in the

parish church. Their great love for the Blessed Sacrament was evinced by untiring solicitude for the cleanliness and beauty of the house of God. Every week the floor was scoured white, while the altars were carefully adorned, and the linens were kept immaculately clean. Mother Aemiliana was known as Tante Ottilia. She survived all her companions, who, one by one, fell asleep in the Lord and were laid to rest in Calvary Cemetery.

Father Batz, who eventually became Vicar General and also Domestic Prelate to His Holiness, Pope Leo XIII, ever provided loyally for his little band of recluses. Before his death, which occurred May 26, 1901, he secured for Mother Aemiliana a deed to the cottage in which she was living, and also arranged with the Sisters of Notre Dame Convent, Milwaukee, for her care and maintenance.

The only one of the little band now left, Mother Aemiliana, continued to wear away her lonely days in prayer and the care of the altar. But the dear soul one day had a disastrous fall which injured her left hip. She now became bed-ridden, abiding for some time in St. Joseph's Hospital and then again in her cottage, where she was waited upon by a postulant from the Notre Dame Convent. At this juncture, the attention of the community at La Crosse was called to the lonely condition of the poor sufferer, and Sister Rose who, at this time, was Superior at St. Francis Hospital, promptly wrote to her former Mother in religion, urging her to come to La Crosse, there to accept the hospitality of the community she had been instrumental in founding.

"I shall not go anywhere as a charity patient," was the abrupt reply to the warm invitation. Finally, how-

Graves of the Six Founders, Milwaukee, Wis.
Graves of Fathers Keppler and Steiger, St. Francis, Wis.

ever, all was arranged, and Sister Rose hastened to Milwaukee to bring her beloved Mother Aemiliana to die in the bosom of her family. The aged invalid on beholding her exclaimed: "Ah, here is my dear little Rose!" During her stay at St. Francis Hospital where every care that love and veneration could suggest was bestowed upon her, she frequently remarked: "Once I was Sister Rose's mother, now she is mine."

Perceiving that her life was drawing to its close, she said one day: "The Blessed Mother of God and the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, whom I have always loved so well, will unlock the golden portals of Heaven for me." On Passion Sunday, March 20, 1904, she breathed forth her soul to God after a long and noble life of seventy-nine years. Her remains were laid out in the Convent oratory, and a few days later conveyed to Milwaukee where she rests in Calvary Cemetery beside her dear companions. Let us remember them all gratefully in our Eucharistic watches. Mother Aemiliana's desire was to found an ideal religious community which should have as one of its chief objects the Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, and though she certainly was most instrumental in laying well the foundation of her community, God permitted His faithful servant to gaze, like Moses, upon the realization of her lofty ambition only from the Mount Nebo of her newly found home—St. Francis Hospital. And here no doubt she turned many a loving glance toward the Chapel of Adoration at St. Rose.

By anticipating events, we have traced the career of our six original founders to the very portals of eternity; hence, it occurs to us that the data of this epoch in our history would be incomplete without a few words as to the subsequent career of the four Brothers, who so materially aided these founders and who were, therefore,

invaluable factors in the establishment of the community, and later, of St. Francis Seminary.

Brother Anthony Zahler was, so to speak, the quasi Superior of the Brothers. Tall and commanding of stature, he possessed a strong character and a still stronger personality. His graceful, polished manners quite became him, especially when serving Holy Mass for the Father Rector, as was his custom. He was an expert carpenter, and used his skill to good advantage in the Convent and the Seminary, generously applying his ample fortune as well as his fine talents in the interest of the Salesianum. His death, in 1870, was but the echo of his brave, pious life. His remains repose near the Chapel of the Woods, at St. Francis.

Brother William Reder, who, you will remember, was a shoemaker by trade, returned to Europe in 1858.

To judge humanly, Brother Leo Bernard, was the saint of the family. He was the ever willing, handy man, his work ranging from the hauling of building material and the beautifying of the grounds, to the chaining of rosaries for the Sisters. It may be interesting to note here that Brother Leo provided the Sisterhood with such articles of discipline, as belts, scourges, and wristlets. Some of these, bearing traces of frequent use, are still shown to the Novices of the community as evidence of the austere spirit which animated the pioneer Sisters. Severe with himself, he was ever sweetly recollected, obliging, and patient. No Sister ever knew Brother Leo to be harsh or ill-humored. In his final, lingering illness, he once exclaimed in a rapture of joy: "Oh! how happy I am to have been one of the first to chant the praises of the Mother of God in these woods!" He died piously on the Feast of All

Saints in 1880, and his grave is also near the Chapel of the Woods.

Brother Joseph Suess lived, body and soul, in his garden. He provided the two kitchens with vegetables and performed the chores about the various departments. As to patience and affability, however, he seemed the very opposite of Brother Leo. No one dared presume to talk garden lore to Brother Joseph; still he was a sound kernel in a rough shell, and as such, greatly appreciated by all. Doctor Salzmann happened to be drafted for the Civil War, but redeemed himself by paying three hundred dollars for a substitute. Poor Brother Joseph, fearing that the same fate might befall him, fled to St. Nazianz, Wisconsin, and was never after heard of by the community.

Thus ends the first scene in our simple tale of a wonderful work of God's goodness.

CHAPTER V

THE LITTLE SISTERHOOD REVIVES

This chapter brings us back to the little orphaned community at St. Francis. Toward noon of the day following the departure of the six Sisters, the Father Rector returned to the Seminary, and went directly to the kitchen to see what prospects there were for dinner. To his great relief, the kettles were bubbling and steaming, and the roasts were browning in savory sauces. Sister Rose Francois, having been assistant to Sister Angela Moser, had intuitively made herself mistress of the situation, though she was well-nigh distracted with grief; for this youthful nun — she was but fifteen years of age on her entrance — had been devoted to Mother Aemiliana with every fiber of her warm, loving heart. With the assistance of a number of maids procured in the neighborhood and in Milwaukee, the Sisters managed to acquit themselves quite satisfactorily of their strenuous duties in the Seminary; so much so, that a young son of poverty among the students one day remarked optimistically: "Ah, what are we fretting about? As long as the Sisters continue to provide for us in this regal manner, we shall surely not starve."

But there was, notwithstanding, ample cause for worry. The very sun of hope seemed to have set forever on the wavering little band of religious. Deprived of its Mother and of its strongest members, could it rise again to weather the storm before which even the founders had recoiled? More and more persistent became the parents, demanding the return home of their

daughters. Sister Rose's father and mother, in particular, were most importunate in their request. The Father Rector, however, ultimately induced them to content themselves and entrust their valiant young daughter to the care of Divine Providence.

Dr. Salzmann, meanwhile, returned from a collecting tour to St. Louis. He appeared to be stunned on hearing what had happened; but at length recovering himself, he declared: "Possibly, they think that we can't do without them. But God still lives."

The good Father Rector was deeply grieved. One thing there was now upon which he was firmly resolved concerning his bit of a community, and which proved a strong anchor henceforth for the little storm-tossed bark; namely, he would in future attend personally to its spiritual direction. Frequently he was heard praying aloud in touching supplication: "Lord, preserve unto me the few who are left." And in truth they were few indeed that rose from the wreckage of that fearful storm — eleven in all. Here are their names in order of admission:

Professed — Sister Seraphine Sanders, Sister Gertrude Graetz, Sister Bridget Nepper, Sister Rose Francois, Sister Crescentia Nondorf, Sister Otillia Lutz;

Novices — Sister Teresa Fraenzel and Sister Coletta Fraenzel;

Postulants — Angela Barbian, Mary Crescentia Herb, and Helen Hamacher. Of this number, four had their posts in the Seminary; three, in the Orphanage; and four, in the Convent.

Bishop Henni, too, was deeply affected on being informed of the small number of Sisters remaining. "Is this then really the community to which the stigma-

tized virgin of Tyrol promised such a remarkable career?" he asked musingly. The virgin of whom His Lordship made mention was Mary Moerl. She was born in Tyrol in 1812, and died in 1868. Simple and unassuming as a child, she was favored by God with ecstasy and also with the stigmata. On one of his visits to Europe, Bishop Henni called on her. Though Mary had never seen the prelate before, she exclaimed when he entered her room: "Ah, behold here the Right Reverend Bishop Henni of Milwaukee!" While conversing with her, His Lordship spoke, among other things, of the Sisterhoods in his diocese, whereupon Mary became strangely preoccupied as if laboring under some strong emotion. "One of these Sisterhoods," remarked she, finally, in prophetic tone, "has hitherto been so poor and small that its members might well-nigh all find room under one umbrella. It will, however, prosper steadily and will eventually rank among the foremost in the Union, but only after awful trials."

The Father Rector had heard of this prophecy through his prelate. And, though the ejaculation, "Lord, preserve unto me the few who are left!" was about the only speech his lips were known to utter during these days of trial, he would now and then also thoughtfully quote the concluding phrase of Mary Moerl's prophecy: "But — but only after awful trials." It seemed to act like a balm upon his troubled spirit and to revive his flickering hope.

On the Feast of the Holy Trinity, the Sunday following the departure of the pioneer Sisters, Father Heiss assembled the remnant of his spiritual children, and addressed them in touching words. In this discourse, which was but the outpouring of his fatherly heart, he ever and again came back to these reassuring words:

"Fear ye not, my little flock, God will preserve you." And God did, indeed, preserve the little flock, but not without great anxiety on the part of the shepherd, who for a long time was harassed with the fear that the recent sad event might be repeated. And if Father Heiss had always been solicitous that the Sisters strive earnestly after perfection, he now became a veritable St. Paul. His conferences, delivered in a clear resonant voice, revealed such a warmth of feeling, such a genuine earnestness, that all felt the charm of his eloquence and the persuasiveness of an irresistible unction; while his solemn oft repeated injunction, "Sisters! strive ever more and more after perfection!" became proverbial in the community.

Meanwhile, vacation had come, and brought to a close that sadly eventful year of 1859-1860. The dark clouds of sorrow gradually lifted, and the Heavenly Father poured into the stricken hearts of this little community the pure bright sunshine of hope. Suffering seemed to have brought out their courage.

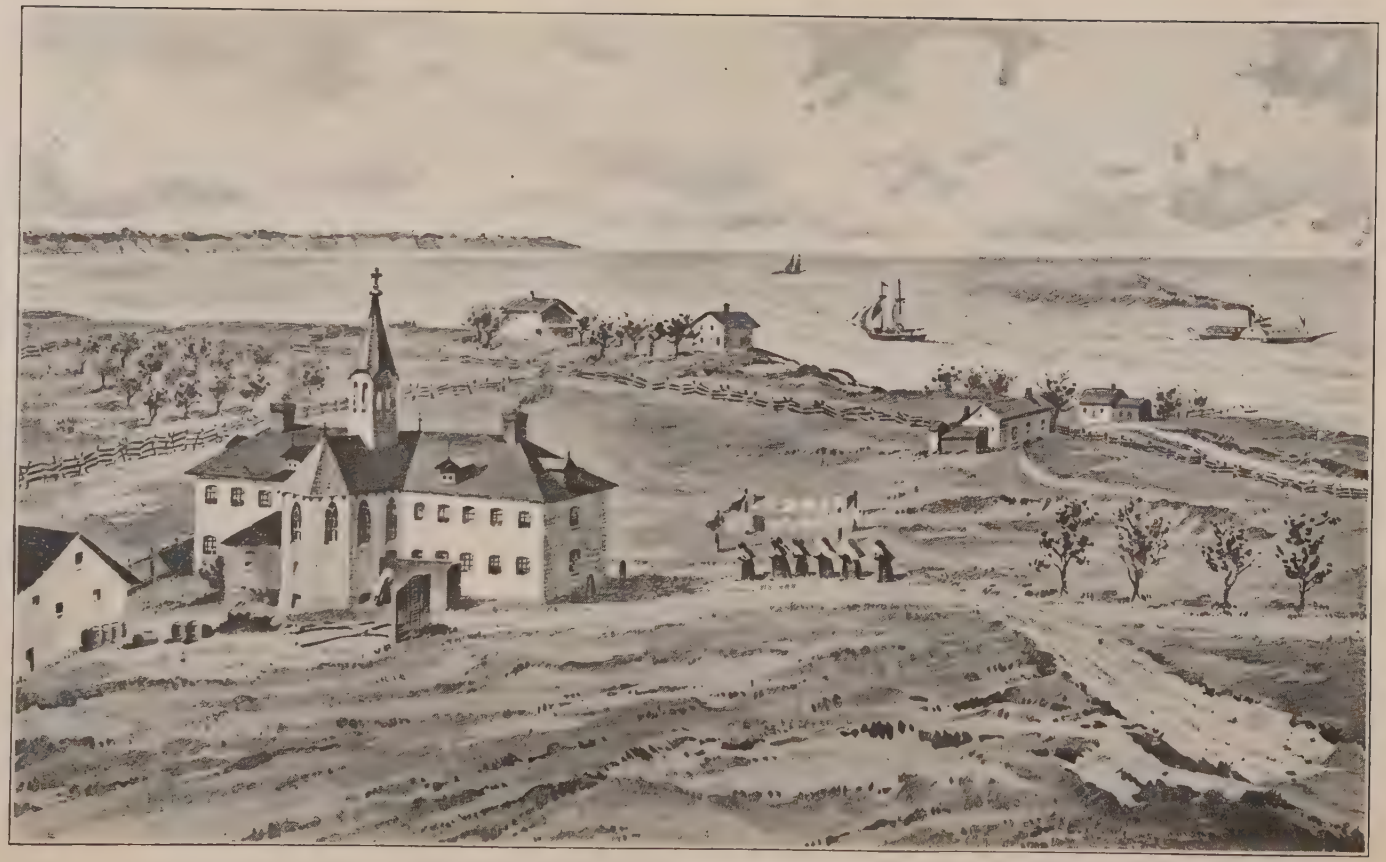
Sister Rose Francois was mistress in the Seminary kitchen and was, naturally, very much occupied; she found leisure, nevertheless, to observe attentively the postulant, Mary Crescentia Herb, who was seamstress in the Convent. Sister Rose was curious to know the latter's disposition of mind relative to her vocation. But all her efforts to discover the postulant's views on the subject proved futile. So she finally asked her directly: "Will you stay in the Convent, Mary Crescentia?"

"I will if you will, Sister Rose," was the candid reply. And the two pledged each other then and there that they would remain, come what might. Their noble avowal was surely registered in heaven, for on it hung

the fate of the community. Relieved of his anxiety concerning the household cares of the Seminary, Father Heiss now, on June 27, 1860, appointed Sister Seraphine Sander, the eldest in point of admission, to succeed Mother Aemiliana for an indefinite time, assigning her Sister Gertrude Graetz as assistant. Thus the community was at length reorganized.

The joyful Franciscan Feast of the Portiuncula followed closely after this. On this festive occasion, the three remaining postulants were received into the novitiate. In fancy, we reverently enter the little chapel of St. Francis. Before the altar, we behold on that second of August, 1860, the three kneeling in fervent prayer. They seem, indeed, a veritable pledge from heaven of the preservation and continuance of the community. As the new novices depart from the chapel, we hasten to meet them at the door. Angela Barbian greets us as Sister Mary; Mary Crescentia Herb is now Sister Antonia; and Helen Hamacher has received the name of Sister Clara.

It seems needless to remark that these dear young nuns ever remained true to their sacred promises; for they had been tried as gold is tried in the furnace, and were found acceptable. In companionship with their elder Sisters in religion, they had passed unscathed through the late catastrophe. Urged on by a holy zeal, each one in the sweat of her brow had exerted all the strength of her frail body, in the discharge of the most arduous employments. Nor could even the much needed night's repose succeeding each day's strenuous labor be enjoyed undisturbed; for, in summer, the rain, pouring in through the roof or pressing in at the doors and windows, drenched the tired sleepers; while in winter, the icy sleet and the biting cold chilled and benumbed their aching limbs.



CONVENT BUILT BY THE SEMINARY, 1861
Sketched from the Third Story of St. Francis Seminary, Aug. 27, 1866, by a Student,
the Present Rev. Guillaume Jacoby of West Point, Iowa

Such were some of the discomforts and hardships endured by the reviving little community, but all were determined to bear up patiently under them, well understanding that only from Calvary's height is Heaven reached. Besides, the Seminary authorities concluded to build a new convent for the Sisters, selecting a location a little to the north of the primitive cloister. The chapel still in good repair was to be moved thither. These improvements were made with the understanding that the community return, by degrees, the outlay thus incurred by the Seminary. It will be remembered that the community had donated the land it once owned to the Salesianum; consequently, the Sisters were now practically dependent upon that institution. The Seminary, on the other hand, was largely maintained by alms; hence, the Sisters received, in return for their services, little beyond board and clothing.

The new cloister was not ready for occupancy until late in the autumn of the following year, 1861. With the love of their vocation and the rising walls of the Convent to give them heavenly hope and much needed earthly cheer, the Sisters were gladly content to bear the inconvenience of their lot still another year.

Sorrows and trials, however, had not decreased in the new course of events. Mother Seraphine's brief regime of two years had not initiated, as had been hoped, an era of prosperity and harmony for the Sisters. Nor is this surprising. Circumstances, such as existed after the departure of the first six Sisters, required the supervision of a Superior endowed with uncommon administrative abilities. Mother Seraphine possessed none of these; yet her earnest good will may serve, in our estimation of her, to offset this deficiency. Like Mother Aemiliana, she considered the heavy out-

door work incompatible with the conventual life of women. Physically delicate herself, she felt for the Sisters, and would have relieved them of these strenuous and distracting occupations.

Considering all, we must conclude that Mother Seraphine labored under difficulties over which she had no control. Yet, few could have felt more keenly than she did the wants that were not easily supplied. Her high hopes and thoroughly religious aims were undoubtedly correct, as also had been Mother Aemiliana's; but it was Mother Seraphine's inopportune efforts to realize these, that brought about the subsequent misunderstanding between the Seminary forces and her community.

As a finale, Sister Crescentia Nondorf, a comparatively young nun, was chosen by the almost unanimous vote of the Sisters to supersede Mother Seraphine. Sister Gertrude Graetz was reinstalled as assistant. This first real election of superiors by the community occurred on July 25, 1862. Mother Crescentia and Sister Gertrude were, however, elected for but one year. Father Heiss wished to test the practicability of the various articles of the Constitutions, and would not, as yet, approve of a longer term of superiorship.

Mother Crescentia's election happily ushered in an era of concord and general good will. The new superior was kindness personified. If she showed any partiality, it was for the Seminary. Motherly and sincere toward the Sisters, she could encourage or chide, with equal effectiveness, despite her rather immature age and lack of experience.

Immediately preceding Mother Crescentia's election, the little sewing-room in the Convent became a center of attraction for the community. Let us observe the

SISTER M. ANTONIA HERB, Elected Mother General, 1863

novice, Sister Antonia, on one of her busy days, and try to discover the cause of her unusual animation. She is already seated in her place dexterously plying her needle. A happy smile illumines her pale features, as she fastens her gaze on the table with a look that seems to say: "I am sure they will like it." Like what? Behold there on the table a black habit carefully arranged. Except for the scapular which has just been added, it does not differ much in cut from the one later adopted by the Sisters. A neatly-hemmed black veil, lined with stiff white cloth also meets our eye. That simple piece of white muslin is suggestive of a typical guimpe, and that white cord with its triple knots reminds one of the rope which gathered the coarse habit of the Seraphic St. Francis close to his wasted form. Assuredly, these articles of dress constitute a religious costume quite different from the one hitherto worn by our Sisters. And we divine the truth! Sister Antonia's methodical mind and deft fingers have admirably succeeded in producing a new mode of religious dress.

Do we like the new garb? The portrait occurring on the opposite page, showing our seamstress appareled in it, will undoubtedly dispose us favorably. Be this as it may, the new attire evidently occupied the attention of the Heavenly Spouse, since He deigned to attach special significance to it by a striking event. The privilege of being the first to be solemnly clothed in it was originally intended for the class of happy maidens who eagerly looked forward to their admission into the novitiate. But just before this joyful occasion, Sister Teresa Fraenzel, who had been afflicted with pulmonary tuberculosis for some time, joined Sister Clara Fremmberger, who three years earlier had begun, we hope, the roll of our community

in heaven. The coveted distinction of being the first to wear the new dress was now conceded to the dear departed. Her lifeless form was reverently shrouded in it, and laid to rest near her elder Sister. Thus the new dress, intended as a nuptial robe, was first worn as a shroud. If the sombre garb of a religious is meant by the Church to be symbolic of a shroud, did not Providence touchingly predesignate ours as such?

> "O happy spouses, whose bridal robe, a sombre shroud;
> Whose very shroud, a bridal robe!"

As if emblematic of a change wrought in their souls during a retreat which closed on the Feast of St. Ann, 1862, the Sisters appeared for the first time, transformed, as it were, in their new garb. A bridal robe it was, indeed, for the happy three who on this day pronounced their first vows. The costumes for the class of postulants about to be clothed were now prepared by Sister Antonia. These differed from those of the professed Sisters in one particular only — the veil of the novice was henceforth to be white. Hitherto the novices had been under the direction of the Mother Superior. On August 2, the community exactly doubled its membership, and ten new novices were placed under the direction of Sister Antonia, our first Mistress of Novices.

No doubt, as the years roll by, interest in our pioneer Sisters will increase. The future members of our Sisterhood will very naturally wish to know more and more of the dear, old, original members; and even we of the here and now recall with mingled feelings of respect and gratitude the names of the first ten members who allied themselves to that tiny remnant of our congrega-

tion left on that sadly memorable evening of May, 1860. Our hearts go out in sympathy to that blessed little band then forced, as they were, either to begin anew or to abandon forever the foundation of our cherished community. With sincerest admiration we look back on these few tried and true souls who, with their ten new members, form according to the plans of Divine Providence the humble, hidden foundation upon which the present superstructure of our community rests. However little the names of these new members may impress others, to us they must be forever dear; and whether or not we shall have occasion later on to refer to any of them individually in this volume, gratitude prompts us to mention their names in full here. They are: Sister Josepha Welsch, Sister Laurentia Scholl, Sister Mechtild Wagner, Sister Augustina Miller, Sister Frances Schmidt, Sister Dominica Nett, Sister Bernarda Wessel, Sister Teresa von der Thannen, Sister Veronica Weiler, Sister Aloysia Seidl.

According to Father Heiss' instructions, as previously mentioned, Mother Crescentia was elected for one year only. During this brief period she won the confidence of her subjects and the esteem and good will of the Seminary faculty. She was not a successful financier, however, and at the close of the year her books showed a deficit of three hundred dollars.

The election which was held the following August, 1863, resulted in the installation of Sister Antonia Herb as Mother Superior and Sister Gertrude Graetz as Assistant.

Meanwhile these seven young Sisters entered upon their novitiate on July 25, 1863: Sister Agnes Fleckenstein, Sister Hortulana Habermann, Sister Cecilia

Jordan, Sister Seraphica Wessel, Sister Adolphina Birkhaeuser, Sister Johanna Martin, Sister Magdalena Reischlein. The community now numbered twenty-seven, — and this was fourteen years after its organization. What patient, hopeful courage must have been exercised by our venerated founder, Archbishop Heiss, and how frequently must the words quoted elsewhere have recurred to him in this connection, "Only after awful trials!"

CHAPTER VI

MOTHER ANTONIA ORGANIZES OUR FIRST NORMAL SCHOOL

At last there stood, in the person of Mother Antonia, a sure pilot at the helm of the stranded little community. Not that Mother Antonia was a singularly gifted woman, but she possessed in a superior degree exactly those qualities which made her a fit instrument in the designs of God for the execution of that peculiar task which fell to her lot. Because of the far-reaching influence Mother Antonia is to wield in establishing the community on a solid basis, the following biographical sketch will not be out of place here.

Born of devout and upright parents in the small town of Itzing in western Bavaria, August 3, 1827, Mary Crescentia Leinfelder, the future Mother Antonia, grew up an exemplary, dutiful maiden. Blessed by the characteristic associations of a truly Christian home, she shared with her two sisters and an only brother the tender love of her excellent parents. Among other reminiscences of her happy childhood, Mother Antonia spoke of her father as a grave and serious-minded man. She loved to tell of the gentle tact wherewith her mother initiated her lively daughter into the various womanly aptitudes and handicrafts which prepared her so efficiently for her future life work.

At the age of nineteen, Mary Crescentia emigrated with her parents to America. The little family built their pioneer home at French Creek near Elyria, Loraine County, about twenty miles west of Cleveland, Ohio. The young girl soon became known for her skill

with the needle and she was employed in sewing for the students in the monastery of the Precious Blood at Tiffin, Ohio; and also for the churches in the various neighboring parishes. The Fathers of the Precious Blood held her in high esteem, which fact served her to good purpose in later years. She had longed, even from her tender childhood, to consecrate her life to God in some convent. While still living in Bavaria, she felt this desire kindled into glowing ardor when her mother took her on a Sunday to visit the Benedictine nuns at Eichstaett. There were, however, at the time of her arrival in America few convents throughout the Central Northwest at whose portals the aspiring Spouse of Jesus might seek entrance; hence, that she subsequently gave her hand in marriage to Peter Zimmer, a young man, honorable, and also pious even to the extent of being a weekly communicant, occasions no surprise. That her husband's tendencies likewise inclined toward a monastic career, seems a providential circumstance of this union.

The young couple hopefully established their conjugal hearth on a small farm at French Creek. Scrupulously faithful to duty and their pious inclinations, they perceived the call to a religious life growing ever stronger within them. Consulting their parish priest, Father Retzor, they at length mutually agreed to part and consecrate their lives to God in religion. There were no children to frustrate these singular, heavenly claims. Legal certifications were soon obtained. The little property was sold and the proceeds divided equally.

The two then confided each other to God's keeping and parted; he, wending his steps whither Providence might direct him, was summoned by his country, then engaged in the Civil War, to join the Federal army.

He obeyed the call, and eventually died the death of a hero; she, directed and recommended by her spiritual guide, Father Xavier Obermueller, Pastor of St. Mary's Church, Cleveland, Ohio, set out by boat in October, 1859, for the poor little Franciscan cloister on Lake Michigan. Here, as Mary Crescentia Herb, she was warmly received by Mother Aemiliana. Herb was her mother's maiden name which she assumed for the purpose of shrouding in obscurity her identity, and of concealing from the outside world her whereabouts. This fact accounts for the signature "Herb" on all the community's business transactions of Mother Antonia's time.

Mary Crescentia's heart was as brave and her step was as firm as were rickety the creaking stairs, which she ascended to her attic room; for she was determined to give herself whole-heartedly to God, mindful of our Savior's words: "No man putting his hand to the plow and looking back is fit for the Kingdom of God." On the day following her entrance into the community, Mother Aemiliana enjoined Sister Johanna Ritter to conduct Mary Crescentia to the Seminary where she might help the Sisters with the household duties. But the new aspirant declared frankly: "Please, Reverend Mother, I would rather not be in the Seminary. I desire to be a Sister and live in the convent; for this have I come." Mother Aemiliana did not take amiss this candid declaration, which, on the lips of another, might have awakened misgivings. It was, perhaps, a significant omen of the coming conflict of opinions with which this resolute young postulant would have to deal later on as Mother Superior of the community.

Mother Antonia, at her election, was a mature young woman in the middle thirties. She was below the medium height, and of a rather full, round figure. Her

hands and feet were small; her features, perfectly symmetrical. Her complexion was fair and rather pale; her forehead, high and free; her nose, finely formed. Her eyes were of a soft gray and full of expression.

She was of a cheerful disposition. Naturally impulsive, her convictions were strong, and her resolutions so inflexible, that with her it ever meant: "Win or die, but win first." It is this combination of extremes in her character which, strange to say, constituted Mother Antonia's chief merit as the right woman at the right time and in the right place. Her faith and fortitude were marvelous, and love for Jesus in the Blessed Eucharist was the dominant note of her life. She invariably turned to the Tabernacle as the sunflower turns to the sun. She had her contradictions; she was opposed, as might be expected; but she knew how to lay her difficulties at the foot of the altar whence she returned with grace and light and strength abundant, for herself and all her spiritual children.

Of a grave and dignified personality, every will under her did unquestioning homage to her own, yet she could be very condescending and winning. A look or smile from her to a Sister, particularly a delinquent who had been previously called rigorously to task, proved so magically fascinating and reassuring that all her contemporary Sisters were unanimous in asserting: "But we loved her."

Mother Antonia's election was a disappointment to the professors of the Seminary. They had been much pleased with Mother Crescentia's congenial rule and felt confident of her re-election. To Doctor Salzmann and the Father Rector, it was a premonition of a pending conflict. Fully conscious of these facts, Mother Antonia, true to her characteristic traits, lost no time in bewailing her position; but taking up the account

books which, as already stated, showed a deficit of three hundred dollars, she hastened to the Seminary where she sought the Father Rector. Falling upon her knees, she implored him to relieve her of her office. "The impossibilities of my charge frighten me," she said. "Under the existing conditions the community cannot prosper. I beg you, Reverend Father, entrust the office to another Sister."

Father Heiss listened to her pleadings and noted her anxious apprehensions, but was not moved from his purpose. "Mother Antonia," said he rather sternly, "You may come to me with any other affair, but you may never again come to me with this one." Then, relenting somewhat, he continued, "I am willing to assist you in word and deed, and I promise to shield and support the Sisters at all times."

Poor Mother Antonia sent her painful but strong-hearted "fiat" heavenward and returned to the Convent reassured. With her innate sense of provision, she now took a full survey of her obligations, determined, as the proverb says, "to lay the ax to the root" of the evils that endangered the existence of the Sisterhood. She resolved primarily to secure for the community the possession of property and of a Motherhouse independent of the Seminary. This would leave the congregation free to admit as many new members as might seek admission, provided they manifested a vocation. This accomplished, the community might advance toward the lofty aims of its six founders; namely:

1. To strive earnestly after Christian perfection by the observance of the simple vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience;

2. To apply themselves to the teaching of children in parish schools, to the care of orphans, and to the nursing of the sick in the hospitals; and,

3. To establish in the community the Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament.

Mother Antonia wisely drew the Father Rector into her confidence with regard to an independent Motherhouse. He favored her plan and even succeeded in winning over Doctor Salzmann. Neither of the two priests, however, was in a position to assist her financially; but she had their approval; and this point gained, paved the way to a second and third; hence, Mother Antonia again sought Father Heiss after some time.

"Reverend Father, I come to you on a subject of vital importance to our little community," she began. "It concerns the admission of postulants. Hitherto, as you are well aware, it has been the rule to admit only as many new members as were absolutely necessary for the execution of the work in the seminary and the orphanage. But a Sisterhood which is prohibited an increase of membership evidently cannot prosper. The overburdening of the Sisters with manual labor and the subsequent detrimental effects on their spiritual life has caused many to leave the Convent. The fact has been the occasion of much gossip; the people speak of us as mere seminary maids and servant girls; and these annoying conditions are barring from our door many an excellent vocation. As a result, we need scarcely look any longer for desirable applications."

"I understand the situation fully," returned Father Heiss, "but what would you do?"

"This," said she, "let us write to priests whom we know to be interested in our Convent, particularly to the Fathers of the Precious Blood in Tiffin, Ohio, to the Redemptorist Fathers in Pittsburg, Pennsylvania, and in Detroit, Michigan, asking them to send us young

girls under their direction who show an inclination for convent life."

"Very good!" declared Father Heiss. "Do as you have proposed, and admit as many new postulants as God in His providential love for the community may inspire to seek admission."

Grateful, but not yet satisfied, Mother Antonia broached still another point. "May we not also, Reverend Father, prepare for the teaching of children in parish schools?" she pleaded.

"As far as I am concerned, you have my hearty approval," said Father Heiss. "But Doctor Salzmann will never favor such an undertaking; for he will fear that the best talent will then be allotted to teaching, and the interests of the Seminary be thus considered of only secondary importance. Besides, in this matter we can do nothing without the sanction of our Right Reverend Bishop; and he will scarcely favor the project, for he will naturally think that the community at St. Francis has no efficient talent with which to begin. You may, however, consult him on the proposition; nothing won, nothing lost."

Mother Antonia was greatly delighted with this first success of her plans. She promptly wrote to a number of priests whom she knew, earnestly begging them to exert their influence in securing postulants for the community. The results were almost immediate, and were strong evidences of the esteem in which Mother Antonia was held by the clergy to whom she applied. Aspirants soon entered from Detroit, Mich., from Pittsburg, Pa., and from Cleveland, and Norwalk, Ohio. Among those sent from the latter place by Father Xavier Obermueller, was Louisa Keller, who, like Mother Antonia, though in a different manner, was destined to inaugurate a new era in the life of the

community. Her sister Julia joined her later, even as the youthful Agnes followed the beloved St. Clare.

Encouraged by these results, Mother Antonia determined to press her plans still further. Accompanied by Sister Cecilia Jordan, who previous to her entrance into religion, had taken some preparatory normal training with a view to teaching in parish schools, Mother Antonia sought Bishop Henni, and humbly begged that the community might begin to train some of its members for teaching in parochial schools. His Lordship refused point-blank. Mother Antonia, however, would not know defeat. She made a second attempt, but met with no better results than the first time. Disappointed, but like a humble daughter of St. Francis not discouraged, she began a novena in honor of St. Joseph and St. Francis. At the close of the novena, she and Sister Cecilia acquainted the Father Rector with their intention of calling on Bishop Henni a third time.

"I fear His Lordship will show you the door," returned Father Heiss; "nevertheless, you may make another venture."

"All good things are three," said Sister Cecilia smilingly. "We shall send St. Joseph and our Seraphic Father St. Francis ahead. And then come we."

The Father Rector could not repress a smile as he commented, "You certainly are well armed with courage. If only His Lordship will not get angry and turn you out, and in the end call me to account."

"Well, in case he should," said she, "we shall simply say, 'Tis all for God,' and leave at least as light-hearted as we entered, accounting the mortification holy joy as did our Father Francis on like occasions."

With fast beating, but trustful hearts, Mother Antonia and Sister Cecilia once more proceeded to Milwaukee to see Bishop Henni.

"What can I do for you?" asked the latter in his usual cheery manner.

"If it please Your Lordship, we beg, in St. Joseph's name and that of our Holy Father St. Francis, that you may permit the Sisters to prepare themselves for teaching in parish schools."

"Why, you have no teaching ability to begin with," returned the Bishop rather bruskly.

"But we shall do our best to develop such," argued the Sisters, "and the professors in the Seminary are willing to assist us. I implore Your Lordship in the name of the Holy Trinity to grant our request."

The Bishop was disconcerted; the ardent spirit of the two simple nuns triumphed over his prejudice, and he at length declared warmly: "I see that you are in earnest and are not lacking in courage; hence, go and do as you wish. You will be no worse off for the attempt, and I shall gladly give you my blessing."

Many were the good gifts of heaven that the two grateful religious called down in fervent accents upon their gracious prelate, as they withdrew to announce at home the success of their errand. The whole community rejoiced exceedingly over the good news. So did the worthy Father Rector. "Your joys, dear Sisters, are the echoes of mine," said he, more astonished at the courage and persistency of the Sisters than at the unexpected consent of the Bishop. But he enjoined Mother Antonia not to accept any schools before he should have previously examined the Sisters and ascertained that they were able to teach. Doctor Salzmann, as was expected, did not favor the undertaking for reasons we have stated.

Mother Antonia entered resolutely upon her new enterprise. Naturally enough, she encountered some

difficulty when she began to select the Sisters who were to constitute that first normal school of the community. On one occasion, she appeared in the sewing room evidently worried. Scanning attentively the faces that were raised inquiringly to her own, she finally said: "I actually do not know whom to take for school."

"O Reverend Mother, do you not want to take me?" was asked in a jovial tone from a farther corner set apart for the mending of stockings.

Mother Antonia looked at the speaker, a pale young novice, and finally declared disparagingly: "Ah, yes! No sooner will you have completed your studies, than you will be ready to die."

This novice, our devoted Sister Agnes was, nevertheless, after a short interval of activity in the Seminary, summoned to the class-room; but she was far from being ready to die when her school days drew to a close. On the contrary, she lived to teach the Lord's "little ones" for nearly two score years, and even to this day, she is one of the most exemplary of our members, being among the first in every community exercise.

A little normal school, good for the time, was at length organized. The material, it is true, was crude; but the good will was there. Educational advantages of our present day make for progress by leaps and bounds, but they would not have added one whit to the sterling worth of the pioneer teachers of our Sisterhood.

There were a few well-informed members in the community who had enjoyed the advantages of a thorough elementary education and, fortunately, had taught for some time. These were appointed to teach the subjects in which they excelled, and were, at the

same time, assisted in advancing themselves. Besides these Sisters, there were also some who were intellectually gifted, but who had received only such meager schooling as a solicitous parent had been able to give. Their earnest endeavors, however, soon supplied all that was lacking in their early education.

How fittingly may here be inserted the memorable words of the great Father Dondren to St. Vincent de Paul when the latter founded his Congregation of the Mission: "Ah! my Father, I recognize that this is the work of God, and that the spirit of Jesus is upon it, and that it will succeed, for all the men are of low birth, and none of them of learning. This is the sort of weapon to which God gives power."

As to the teaching staff, Mother Antonia engaged a certain Miss Strauss, a parochial school teacher of some experience, to take charge of the school for the winter season. At Easter, Miss Strauss left to return to Europe and Sister Cecilia Jordan took her place. The latter was eventually succeeded by Sister Veronica Mueller who had filled a record of fourteen years of teaching previous to her entrance.

The Father Rector conducted classes in pedagogy, geography, and astronomy. Professor Ries also taught a number of classes. This man had a remarkable gift of correlating the various profane subjects with religion. We certainly should have enjoyed his lesson on the correlative significance of the number three. He pointed out how three parts — subject, predicate, and modifiers — constitute a sentence; three values — two known and one unknown — form the constituent elements of every problem in mathematics; the triad — do, mi, sol — serves as a basis in music; three primary colors — red, blue, and yellow — are rudimentary in painting. In like manner and with equal facility, Pro-

fessor Ries illustrated to his students the principle, that every fundamental truth, as a conception of the mind, relates by its triple components to the Holy Trinity, the source of all right reasoning.

It needs scarcely be said that the Sisters availed themselves diligently of their opportunities. They regretted only that the classes were often woefully disturbed, particularly during the seeding and harvesting seasons. Frequently during those busy intervals, the Sisters had, perhaps, just settled down to their studies when there came a smart rap-tap at the door, followed by a hasty message — one moment of breathless silence, the heaving of smothered sighs, some brave "fiats" — and the work in the classroom was exchanged for that of either field or garden. Instead of pencil and pen, the nuns now wielded the hoe and the sickle. The hands that had shortly held the book and the slate, now bound the grain into bundles and collected the golden sheaves into shocks.

The summer of 1864 was particularly remembered for these incursions on their convent and school work. The Brothers could not possibly keep pace with the work; and Doctor Salzmann felt that he could not afford to hire outside help, so the Sisters were obliged to yield without murmur to his demands, feeling keenly, nevertheless, the sting of their dependency.

Such, then, was the beginning of the training school for teachers in the community, — a very humble one, we admit; but the secrets of the Most High are with the simple and upright of heart. The very humble origin of the school was in itself a pledge of the future efficiency the Sisterhood would eventually reach among the teaching communities.

Original Motherhouse. Completed Motherhouse and Chapel. Mr. J. Leinfelder, Architect.
Jefferson, Wis.

CHAPTER VII

THE MOTHERHOUSE FOUNDED AT JEFFERSON, WISCONSIN

If the organization of the first normal school and the training of the teachers were trying, the founding of a new Motherhouse was incomparably more difficult. The initial step toward this undertaking was necessarily the choice of a suitable location. All concerned, particularly the faculty of the Seminary and Mother Antonia, were of the opinion that it should not be erected in or near the Seminary grounds. For this purpose Father Heiss and Doctor Salzmann went to Roxbury, Wisconsin. Here Father Adalbert Inama, a learned Norbertine monk from Tyrol, had made an unsuccessful attempt to lay a foundation of his order. The land which he had procured had not as yet been put to any use; and Father Heiss and Doctor Salzmann hoped to receive it as a donation or, at least, to be able to procure it on very reasonable terms. Nor did they miscalculate; for the zealous Father Inama rejoiced at the prospects of having his property thus serve so good a purpose, and would have gladly made a gift of it to the Sisters. After due deliberation, however, the thought of building at Roxbury was abandoned, and Jefferson taken under consideration. The two professors then sought out the little town located in southeastern Wisconsin.

Commercially favored by nature, Jefferson was bounded by the Rock, Crawfish, and Bark Rivers, and Lake Koshkonong, an expansion of the Rock River. The fitful ripple and babble of the fast-flowing streams

mingled with the hum and the whir of busy mills, while steaming engines bore passengers and traffic over two different lines into and out of the little village.

Our two Reverend explorers judged that Jefferson was a most inviting and promising place for the location of the proposed Motherhouse; and they decided unhesitatingly that the convent be built there, close to St. John's Church. But again the proverb, "Man proposes and God disposes," was to be verified. The site of the new Motherhouse was to be determined only at the cost of the most perplexing annoyances. It seems puzzling that such should have been the case with a matter so manifestly simple; yet it was perplexing, to say the least. Here is the situation in a nut-shell: About two miles east of Jefferson, on a gentle prominence, was located the mother settlement whence the city of Jefferson orginally sprang. The Catholic inhabitants of this out-of-town aggregation, as well as of the surrounding country, formed by far the larger portion of the population and constituted the parish of St. Lawrence. From this parish was formed in 1859, St. John's congregation in the town of Jefferson, at first attended, as a mission, by the pastor of St. Lawrence. The tables were one day quite unceremoniously turned, however, to the unspeakable consternation of the parishioners of St. Lawrence, who suddenly woke up to the startling discovery that their priest, Father Beiter, had transferred his residence to St. John's Church in town, and St. Lawrence, the parent church, had become the mission.

Jefferson, with its splendid water-power facilities and good railroad accommodations, had drawn thither a large number of Catholics. The parish subsequently petitioned Bishop Henni very urgently for a resident priest. As a consequence, Father Beiter at that time

pastor of the St. Lawrence Congregation went quietly, over night, as it were, to live in town at St. John's. The exasperated people of St. Lawrence came clamoring to the Bishop. His Lordship disarmed their indignation somewhat with the promise that a religious institution would ultimately be built upon the St. Lawrence Hill. The Bishop now saw the opportunity of redeeming his promise; nor was he slow in seizing it. "If the Sisters are going to build in Jefferson, it must be in St. Lawrence Parish," said he.

"Does your Lordship not think it will be more practical for us, as an active community, to locate in town?" argued Mother Antonia.

"No, not in town; build your convent at St. Lawrence," persisted the Bishop.

At this point of our narrative Father Hubert Jansen appears on the scene. He has succeeded Father Beiter as pastor of St. John's and the St. Lawrence Congregation, and naturally he, too, has a word to say: "The convent belongs in town," he remonstrated.

"But we will have it in our parish, for so it was promised us by the Right Reverend Bishop," protested the St. Lawrence parishioners as a fourth party.

"Build at St. Lawrence or not at all," decided the inflexible Bishop.

Meanwhile the glorious Feast of the Portiuncula had arrived, ushering in the usual solemnities for the Convent on Lake Michigan, and the question in dispute was suspended for the time being. Everyone silently presumed that the Religious Reception and Profession of that Second of August of 1864 would be the last celebrated at St. Francis. The fact lent an unusual touch of pathos to the occasion. The following eight postulants, constituted the last class which donned the religious garb in the first nursery of our community:

Sister Alphonsa Head, Sister Michaela Nepper, Sister Kiliana Tancre, Sister Seraphine Stuhl, Sister Rosalia Wunderly, Sister Benedicta Wunderly, Sister Bonaventura Lamb, and Sister Romana Schoen. A few days later, on the Feast of Our Lady of the Snow, the following Sisters pledged their vows to their Divine Spouse: Sister Agnes Fleckenstein, Sister Cecilia Jordan, Sister Seraphica Wessel, and Sister Johanna Martin.

Just a week after these festivities, the parish of St. Lawrence celebrated its Patronal Feast. Doctor Salzmann and Mother Antonia made it a point to be present, to honor the occasion, and also to come to some definite conclusion concerning the site of the new Motherhouse. Doctor Salzmann delivered the sermon of the day, and his brilliant personality together with his charming eloquence captivated his listeners and endeared him to these good, simple country folk. Scarcely were the ceremonies over, when the trustees of the parish begged to confer with the Reverend Professor and the Venerable Mother on the question of building a convent in their parish. Father Jansen did his utmost to dissuade them from their purpose. He argued and promised and threatened, and finally declared: "If you will have your way, go and seek the Methodist living at the foot of the hill; buy his house and farm, and give both to the Sisters at half price!" This he said merely to deter them from their purpose, never dreaming that they would take him at his word.

These up-and-doing men grasped the idea in the twinkle of an eye and promptly called a parish meeting. Before midnight of that same day, they roused Doctor Salzmann from his slumbers in the town parsonage with the news: "We have bought out the Methodist for four thousand dollars, and will transfer the whole property to the Sisters at half cost." Doctor

Salzmann marveled, and broke forth in a ringing: "Bravo! Bravo!" Father Jansen did not like the turn the affairs had taken and tried hard to prevent the Sisters from carrying out their design.

How much less anguish it would have caused poor Mother Antonia to have reared her convent in the enterprising little town, but she had to yield silently to Bishop Henni's unalterable decision. Besides, considering the abject poverty of the community, the new acquisition of property was in reality a rare boon, and she very gratefully accepted the generous offer of the good St. Lawrence parishioners.

In order to forestall any possible misunderstanding, Father Heiss went to Jefferson and, with the consent of Father Jansen, assembled the people of St. Lawrence Parish. After some preliminary deliberation, he proposed to them the following conditions for acceptance:

1. That the outlay of the two thousand dollars on the Sisters' property be a free gift; and that the Sisters be not expected to teach the school of the parish without remuneration.

2. That the Sisters, should they at any time choose to leave the parish, be not held accountable for the money expended by the parish on their property.

3. That the parish do not take for granted that they be given along with the convent, also a priest of their own.

The first two conditions were unanimously accepted. Not so the third. It was precisely the hope of obtaining a resident priest that had urged the parish to eclipse itself, as it were, in generosity toward the Sisters; so they earnestly entreated the Father Rector that this matter be left undecided for the present. Father Heiss wisely acquiesced, and, returning to St. Francis, entrusted the modified agreement, signed by the trustees

of St. Lawrence Congregation, to Mother Antonia. Two thousand dollars, made up of the Sisters' doweries, were forthwith sent to Father Jansen with a courteous request for a deed to the property in question. The document, as might be expected, was tardy in coming.

When it did come, Mother Antonia at once prepared for the removal of the community to Jefferson. Occasions of this nature usually bear the fascination of novelty, and they prove quite interesting, though they are not without anxiety. But in this instance, the shadow of the cross cast its gloom upon the community. No sooner had Mother Antonia's intention of founding a Motherhouse in another locality and of employing the Sisters in teaching parochial schools become known, than there rose a whirlwind of evil gossip. Satan was evidently going "about like a roaring lion" seeking to devour the good work. The derisive comments that made the rounds were neither creditable to those who indulged in them nor at all encouraging to the poor Sisters who sorely needed all the financial and moral support that could be given them. It would seem that at this most trying time in their existence they received little of either.

The founding of a new Motherhouse was in reality a hazardous enterprise. The community had invested the little money it had on hand in the undertaking, hence, it had no means with which to secure even the bare necessaries of life. Taking charge of schools was scarcely a less venturesome project, but both these good works were manifestly willed by Divine Providence; and Mother Antonia's unbounded trust in God, as well as her marvelous greatness of soul, shone out brightly through the gloom of those trying days, inspiring all with her lofty sentiments. "Did not the

Redeemer of the world," said she to her Sisters, "show in His own Divine Person that one's purest intentions and worthiest actions are frequently misunderstood and unjustly condemned. This must ever be the lot of those who devote themselves solely to the service of God."

The thought that they were living and working for God helped to dispel the dark clouds of sadness and anxious care. Had a nun of that time been required by obedience to carry water in a sieve, she would have tried to obey implicitly. Or, were the Superior obliged to send a Sister, possessed of but meager learning, to teach a district school and pass a preliminary examination under a severe, unfriendly superintendent, which actually happened several times, both the Superior and the subject, trusting in the intercession of St. Joseph, would have felt confident of success; so firmly was the community impressed with the thought that God was taking care of their interest as His own. It may here be said that Mother Antonia and the Sisters of her day have bequeathed to the succeeding generations of the Sisterhood their unbounded faith in St. Joseph and in the Holy Angels, particularly St. Michael, and that these devotions have become, through them, distinctive of our community.

All was at last in readiness for the departure of the first company of Sisters for Jefferson. The Father Rector had set the twenty-ninth of September, 1864, for the event. The day dawned bright and clear. It was a Thursday, the ferial of the Blessed Sacrament and the Feast of St. Michael the Archangel. The advance guard of the community was composed of Mother Antonia, Sister Ottilia, Sister Veronica, Sister Cecilia, Sister Seraphica, Sister Agnes, and the novice,

Sister Kiliana. They assisted devoutly at Holy Mass and received Holy Communion with great fervor on that memorable morning. Having thus buckled on their spiritual armor, they knelt for a parting blessing from Father Heiss. At the side of their fatherly friend, stood at this moment a tall, slender figure with kindly features and beaming eye. It was the gentle Father Flasch, a professor at the Seminary, who was destined to become "all to all" for the struggling Sisterhood in its hour of darkest trial. "If, on reaching Jefferson," said he, like another Simeon, to Mother Antonia, "you find everything arrayed against you, and cross upon cross presenting itself, so that you seem forced to turn back, then feel assured that your undertaking is God's work — and stay." Reassured by his encouraging words, the brave Superior trustfully placed all under the protection of the glorious St. Michael, and turned to depart. Good Brother Leo was patiently waiting at the gate with his "carryall," a rude lumber wagon.

Let us see the pilgrims off. Mother Antonia and four of the Sisters climb into the conveyance, and make themselves as comfortable as possible among the baggage. But try as they may, they cannot make room for their two remaining companions, Sisters Agnes and Ottilia. "Do not worry, Reverend Mother, we can walk," they assure her. "God bless you! dear travelers." "Good-bye, kindest of Fathers and do pray for us," are distinctly heard among the various farewells. And away rolls the wagon along the chilly Lake to Milwaukee, Sister Agnes and Ottilia following along cheerfully at some distance. On reaching Milwaukee, all will proceed by train to their new home. We note no tears, no outbursts of pent-up feelings. These simple, loyal nuns loved the little village of St. Francis as the God-chosen Alma Mater of their order, but to-

day the heartstrings must be untwined with little or no outward show of emotion. They are Sisters, and the Master has willed it!

It was in autumn, you will remember, that the Sisters arrived at Jefferson, and nature seemed to be wholly intent upon tucking herself snugly away for the winter. The oaks and the maples had already exchanged their robes of richest green for their more sombre livery of russet and saffron, while the topmost on the ridges stood out gaunt and almost naked, like sentinels portending danger. The reception given the Sisters at the parsonage in Jefferson had in it the chill of the season. The signs which, according to Father Flasch, were to make it most evident that the project was God's own were early perceptible.

Many, indeed, were the embarrassing experiences in the new home of their adoption. These might have affrighted a less intrepid band of nuns under the care of a less noble, less provident Mother. But they were prepared to face bravely all the trials and opposition which good Father Flasch had declared were tokens that God willed their undertaking. They, therefore, cheerfully accepted all contradictions, crosses, and trials which Providence permitted to befall them.

Mother Antonia sent several of her Sisters in advance to "make ready" one of the rooms where they might partake of a frugal supper and have their first night's repose in St. Lawrence. It seemed to them only a bit of a walk, the two miles they had traveled, for they conversed as they went much as two other lovers of Jesus had done on the way to Emmaus.

Arrived at the old cottage, their convent, they began to unpack whatever was at once most needed. They filled the straw-ticks and arranged them neatly and in order on the floor to serve as couches. Before long,

Mother Antonia and the rest of the party also arrived. Now the building was explored from the attic to the cellar. It was lonesomely bare, echoing and re-echoing the innocent chatter of the Sisters.

The original owners still occupied a rear part of it, and kindly offered the use of their stove to the Sisters. The tea was promptly put to steep, while the trunks and boxes were converted into tables and chairs. Some eatables brought along were spread upon a large box, and the little Franciscan family ate their first meal in the new Motherhouse. Holy Poverty sat with them at table and accompanied them at every step, but did not disturb their peace of heart; and they soon slept the sweet slumber of care-free children upon their hard, stiff straw-ticks. How true it is: "A wise man needs but little; and a saint, still less." And why should we fret about the future, when God allows us to sleep nigh half of it away?

Mother Antonia had brought with her one whole dollar! If anyone should have expressed surprise at her venturesome courage and have said: "With one dollar you will assuredly not keep the wolf of hunger and want from your door," she would have answered with St. Teresa: "Very true, one dollar and Mother Antonia will not; but one dollar, Mother Antonia, and Almighty God will." And thus it was. During the first few days the Sisters lived on potatoes boiled and seasoned with salt; black coffee or tea served as the usual beverage. But the dauntless Mother Antonia confidently chose St. Joseph as the warden of her household and began a novena in his honor. Nor was the glorious Saint slow in acknowledging the confidence thus shown him. Scarcely had they begun the nine-day prayer, when one kindly neighbor brought two huge loaves of bread and a large juicy ham; and another,

presented a dozen of fresh eggs. Thus the Heavenly Father provided for His hungry children through the mediation of St. Joseph, just as in days of old He had provided through him for Jesus and His Blessed Mother.

The new Motherhouse was dedicated to St. Coletta, as had been suggested by Bishop Henni. "Coletta is a beautiful name," said he to Mother Antonia on the event of her leave-taking. The name of the illustrious Franciscan reformer was in truth a very appropriate name for the new Motherhouse, for the foundation of St. Coletta Convent at Jefferson was the forerunner of a great change, a complete evolution in the history of the community.

The Sunday following their arrival at Jefferson, the little band of Sisters became the object of pious curiosity to the good people of St. Lawrence Congregation. We can readily imagine the interesting scene. Young and old gathered in groups before the church door and along the walks and by-paths leading to it. Conversations mellowed down to a whisper at the sight of the silent, black-robed, closely-veiled figures, proceeding up the hill. As they slowly ascended and descended a series of steps leading over a high board fence, and passed modestly on toward the church, the simple country folk beheld in them beings, perhaps, supernatural. Sister Kiliana, the novice, being the youngest, led the way. Tall, and veiled in snowy-white, she drew the attention of the crowd with the fascination of an apparition. "She must be the Superior," the various groups conjectured as they broke up and followed the nuns into the house of prayer. As if to add the crowning touch to this pleasant advent of the Sisters, Father Jansen, contrary to every expectation, received them with great deference, reserving for them the first pews

in the Church, and handing them the aspergillum individually at the Asperges.

Fervent were the prayers breathed forth by those unpresuming nuns as they knelt for the first time among the good St. Lawrence parishioners, who had so generously welcomed them. "To-morrow our Catholic schools here and in town will be open," was the announcement which engrossed the interest of the Sisters. A happier message we cannot imagine, since it was for them the dawning of a new day — a day they had anxiously hoped for and have ever since cherished.

The bright October sun of that eventful "to-morrow" which chanced to be the vigil of the Feast of St. Francis, shone gloriously upon two groups of happy children gathered in wondering admiration about their first religious teachers, Sisters Cecilia and Kiliana, who organized St. John's school in the business section of the town. Mother Antonia shared with them the tedium of their two-mile walk to school, and contributed in no small measure toward making four o'clock of that October 3rd "the end of a perfect day" for teachers and pupils. Though the Sisters had been assigned rooms right in the building for residence, on this particular occasion they accompanied Mother Antonia home; for the morrow being the glorious feast of St. Francis, Father Jansen had kindly granted the school a holiday.

Imagine the meeting of the trio with Sisters Agnes and Veronica, who had initiated the little St. Lawrence force into class routine. Like the Apostles returning after their first mission, these first parochial school teachers in our community had much to tell and many interesting views to exchange. The St. Lawrence school building was a mere shanty, consisting of but one room. For two teachers to conduct classes in the same apart-

ment, and crowded with pupils so as scarcely to allow space for passage between them, is, we all know, a very trying task; but, in this instance, the annoying circumstance was quite forgotten in the pleasure of having such dear, good children to deal with. The St. Lawrence parishioners showed the greatest appreciation. Even those who lived at a distance of four or five miles sent their children regularly regardless of the inclemencies of the seasons, and gladly did the little ones walk the whole distance to attend the Sisters' School. Among these light-hearted, bright-eyed pedestrians were numbered our later Sister Euphrosine Endl, Sister Pascaline Liebl, and Sister Coletta Schuld.

With the two schools thus auspiciously opened, the Sisters felt disposed to spend an enjoyable St. Francis day in their new home. Father Jansen celebrated a High Mass in St. Lawrence Church, during which the Sisters received Holy Communion. After the Holy Sacrifice, came the benediction with the Blessed Sacrament. The former owners of the house had moved out and the Sisters now had full sway in transforming the poverty-stricken cottage, the orchard, and the farm with all its belongings. We know what the first band of Sisters were doing and how glad, too, they were in the doing, but it is hard to imagine how anxiously their good Sisters who had been left for the time at St. Francis longed to be with them.

At length on the day following the feast of St. Francis, the joyful news went around: "Reverend Mother has come!" Many were the eager questions and the interesting answers on this happy occasion. Mother Antonia chose from among the little band, to return with her, Sister Mary Barbian, Sister Alphonsa Head, Sister Michaela Nepper, Sister Seraphine Stuhl, Sister Bonaventure Lamb, and the postulants Louisa Keller

and Josephine Meisner. With joyful hearts, this second company set out for Jefferson where they were warmly welcomed by the Sisters who had preceded them.

Mother Antonia gradually initiated her Sisters into a truly religious life which emulated that of the illustrious St. Clare and her Sisters — prayer, silence, obedience, humility, labor, and even the discipline, were all practiced most diligently and at times most heroically. The new Motherhouse at last actually existed, and with the blessings of heaven, was preparing to send out many other pious virgins to instruct unto justice Christ's "little ones."

The community at first depended for support almost entirely on the charity of the people. As their numbers kept increasing by the entrance of new postulants, the Sisters were soon greatly incommoded for want of sleeping room. But the old parsonage was vacant, hence, some of its apartments were readily transformed into cells; and at the close of each day's round of duties a number of Sisters, the first one lighting the way with a lantern, might be seen wending their way to the rickety old building for their well deserved slumber.

A third school was opened during the latter part of October at Cross Plains, Wisconsin. Sister Mary, Sister Ottilia, and Sister Seraphica were given charge of this mission. Mother Antonia accompanied them and remained several weeks with them. After her return to Jefferson, she sent them a postulant, who had recently entered, known later on as Sister Lucy Wagner, to assist Sister Mary in the housekeeping.

Unfortunately, however, Sister Seraphica soon fell a prey to consumption; and the following August, after some weeks of extreme suffering, there came unto her the Divine summons: "Veni, Sponsa Christi," and

gladly she went forth to the celestial nuptials. Thus in sorrow and joy, the new Motherhouse offered to the Master the first fruit of His garden planted at Jefferson.

An epidemic of typhoid fever broke out at St. Francis at the close of the year 1865, and the Angel of Death found in the Convent four more precious lives ripe for his sickle. Sister Johanna Martin led the death-roll on the last day of the year. At one time in her delirium, she seemed to be seeking some lost article on her coverlet. Mother asked her: "Sister, are you looking for something?" "Reverend Mother," returned the dying Sister, "the Evil One is nigh and is constantly taunting me with the question, 'Religious, religious, where is your name?'" Mother Antonia said promptly: "Sister, tell him: 'In the Book of life'." The Sister obeyed and died peacefully. It may be remarked that Sister Johanna and Sister Seraphica had asked of God while prostrate before the altar on the day they pronounced their vows that they might die in the first years of their profession. The incident, therefore, seemed striking; and Mother Antonia ever after admonished the novices of each succeeding year not to make a similar petition to God on the day of their profession. Sister Bernarda Wessel followed Sister Johanna in April. Sister Angela Weibert died when the autumn leaves were falling in early October. The life of this young religious seemed to be singularly marked by Heaven. Patient, humble, and mortified always, she seemed to have no human passions. The sanctity of God enveloped her like a garment. Father Flasch broke forth in acclamation of holy joy as she breathed her last, and later he remarked to the Sisters, "Would to God that I, too, could die such a holy death!" Sister Raymunda Schumacher, a novice, went joyfully forth

on November 9 of the same year to join her companions, after having pronounced the holy vows. She was the last of the community buried at St. Francis.

The Sisterhood, so small in number, felt these deaths keenly, but bowed in humble resignation to God's holy will. It was in these days of sorrow that the community instituted the custom of reciting every Saturday the "Psalms of the Holy Name of Mary," as a protection against plague and storm. Nor has the Sisterhood, during the many years that have since elapsed, suffered any notable harm from either of these evils.

The beloved dead of the community are buried in different cemeteries. But, no matter where their mortal remains may repose, on the anniversary of each Sister's death a memorial card is placed in the chapel of the Perpetual Adoration where prayers are offered for the deceased during each of the twenty-four hours of the day.

CHAPTER VIII

DIREST WANT AT JEFFERSON. RELIEF AND WONDERFUL BLESSING

"If on reaching Jefferson you find everything arrayed against you, and cross upon cross presenting itself so that you seem forced to turn back, then feel assured that your undertaking is God's work — and stay!" These, we remember, were Father Flasch's parting words to Mother Antonia as she set out for Jefferson, and though they were literally verified, we shall speak here, in general terms only, of the hardships and trials of the first winter at Jefferson.

One should expect that among the first things the Sisters would do on reaching their new home would be to fit out a room for a chapel, and then invite their dear Lord to abide with them under the sacramental species. This they did. The tabernacle was prepared a very short time after the Sisters' arrival, and stood in primitive simplicity awaiting the advent of the Divine Prisoner, but somehow Father Jansen could not be persuaded to grant the Sisters this privilege. God permitted this trial, no doubt, as He did so many others to purify and prepare them the better for the great favor accorded the Sisterhood in after years in the establishment of the Perpetual Adoration. Father Jansen's own statement, later on, "that he did not know why he had acted thus," would seem to confirm this opinion.

A Motherhouse and the dear Eucharistic Lord absent! There was His little improvised chapel, but the tabernacle open and empty! It seemed rather like a tomb

He had abandoned. In their warm hearts, however, the Sisters promised to cherish Him till He deigned to live constantly with them. And there were other serious privations that could not be ignored. The fuel required for the preparation of the frugal meals consisted of dried twigs and old, fallen trees, which were gathered and brought home from the neighboring woods. This dry wood kindled easily, and served its purpose as long as the warm weather lasted; but when King Winter appeared, and held the land in his icy grip, the poor Sisters were frequently sent to bed to keep warm and at the same time to save a meal. In short, with neither fuel nor food, and no funds in sight wherewith to purchase them, Mother began to think seriously of abandoning Jefferson and returning to St. Francis. As if to confirm her in this resolution, there came a letter from Father Heiss, advising her to dismiss the novices and postulants, give up the schools, and return at once with the Professed Sisters.

For some time, the community had been subsisting on two meals a day, and matters must have reached their worst during the Christmas week; for about this time, Mother assembled her little flock and informed them of Father Heiss' advice. But feeling responsible in part for the vocation of the novices and postulants, she offered to apply to other communities for the admission of her younger religious children. The grace of God, however, so strengthened their spirits that they seemed to forget the needs of body, and they were determined to persevere in their vocation, come what might. "No, Reverend Mother," declared the Sisters energetically, "let us not give up so soon. Having made a brave beginning, let us continue ever trustful and courageous." The postulants and novices also vied with each other in steadfastness of purpose, and de-

clared resolutely: "Oh, no, Reverend Mother, we cannot think of leaving the Convent. What you and the Sisters can endure, we, too, can bear. We will share every trial and hardship with you, if you will only permit us. Do let us stay!"

As night brings out the stars, so the deep gloom of that Christmastide served but to bring out in clear relief the heroic spirit of sacrifice that animated the little band. Mother Antonia seemed to feel in it all the presence of Jesus "commanding both the winds and the sea." She took new courage, therefore, and appealed to the trustees of the parish for aid. These good men were amazed when she informed them how extremely the Sisters had suffered, and they lost no time in generously supplying the Convent with fuel and food. In fact, the next day, St. Coletta's grounds presented a most unusual scene. Here stood a wagon loaded with flour, there another filled with vegetables, a third laden with various provisions; wood was supplied in abundance; in short, never again did the Sisters at Jefferson suffer the pangs of hunger or the sting of the wintry blast. Again the little Franciscan bark had weathered the storm, and the idea of abandoning the new Motherhouse became, as it were, only a dream to be forgotten.

But their souls continued to be hungry and desolate. Without His love in the Eucharist, all the world and its comforts are as nothing. Perhaps, the Master was only trying their confidence, so encouraged their Mother, as of old He had tried the Apostles on the Lake of Galilee. Indeed, He was with them, — there was no doubt, though He seemed for a long time to be asleep, and deaf to all pleadings for His Sacramental Presence; for they had spent hours before the empty tabernacle begging Him to take up His abode therein. But God has

His own time, His own ways of granting even our most fervent petitions, and this case should prove no exception.

In March, 1865, Mother Antonia was confined to her bed. She was frequently obliged of late to keep to her bed; for the constant pressure of pent-up feelings could not but bring on attacks of complete prostration. Her frail body was not equal to the severe strain of the intense struggle between her impetuous nature and the incessant contradictions she suffered. On this particular Sunday, the Feast of St. Joseph, she was quite ill, indeed. The fact of her indisposition was known, however, only to the family circle; hence, the Sisters were astounded to discover Father Jansen hurrying along early in the morning, making straight for the Convent door. His hasty rap was answered by Sister Michaela.

"How is Mother Antonia? Is she still living?" asked he in an excited manner.

"Why, yes; she is living, though she is ill and confined to her bed," returned Sister Michaela somewhat alarmed by Father Jansen's excitement and strange questions.

"Tell her," enjoined he, "that I shall call upon her after Mass."

It was Sunday, and Father Jansen was on his way to St. Lawrence Church to offer Holy Mass. On his return later, he told Mother Antonia that on the following Tuesday he would read Mass in the Convent, and would then comply with the Sisters' desire of having the Blessed Sacrament under their roof.

The reader, no doubt, is anxious to learn the cause of Father Jansen's sudden change of mind. From his housekeeper's account of his strange actions on the night previous to his call at the Convent, we do not hesitate to suggest that he must have experienced some

supernatural intervention. As this is, however, one of those events in which the finger of God is manifestly visible, we shall attempt no explanation. One thing concerning it is very evident: It was a striking example of the power of earnest, persevering prayer, and particularly that of the intercession of St. Joseph. Father Heiss, when questioned concerning Father Jansen's mysterious actions on that particular night, answered evasively: "What happened to Father Jansen that night will ever remain a secret."

Tuesday morning bright and early, Father Jansen came hurrying along calling and beckoning vigorously to a postulant, who happened to be working outdoors: "Go in and tell them that I will say Mass right away," said he. Can we imagine a Holy Mass attended by more grateful souls! The schools had been given a holiday, and all the Sisters were assembled at St. Coletta's. With Mary in Sion's temple, they offered their Sacramental Jesus to the Heavenly Father with all the fervor of their well-chastened spirits, asking Him to accept with this Oblation the offering of the new Motherhouse with all its holy ambitions. Sister Cecilia played on a small melodeon brought along from St. Francis. Sister Gertrude, Sister Veronica, and Sister Michaela Nepper constituted the choir.

After the Holy Sacrifice, Father Jansen adjusted to the cover of the ciborium. a luniform pyx, large enough to hold a small Host. The sacred vessel thus presented a unique little monstrance such as was commonly used by a pioneer missionary. In this glittering golden receptacle, the Blessed Sacrament was exposed upon the humble altar for an entire day's adoration. What a holy surprise! It is not in the power of human pen to describe the happiness that inundated the souls

of our dear Sisters during that first day of Adoration in the Motherhouse of the community.

Almost transported with joy over the sudden realization of their most ardent desire, the Sisters vied with one another in the length and fervor of their visits, and exulted in the Divine Presence without the least sense of weariness. Much too early did Father Jansen appear for the closing devotions of that blessed day! We can imagine how gratefully the little community sang its "Good night" to Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament; and how lovingly our Eucharistic Savior blessed these souls who had so long sought Him with an ardor similar to that of the Spouse in the Canticles.

Only when all had thus come to a fitting close, did it occur to the Sisters that there was no lamp in the house sufficiently large to supply light for the entire night.

"We cannot leave the dear Lord without a light," said Mother Antonia, "yet we have none; and it is two miles to town. What can we do?"

"I know how to make a very good lard light, dear Mother," said Sister Alphonsa.

"What a relief, my child! Prepare one at once," she replied. "Lard should not be burned in a sanctuary lamp, but Jesus will accept our poor light graciously, for we will add to the lard the pure oil of our hearts' truest devotion."

Sister Alphonsa promptly procured a piece of soft tissue paper, twisted it into a taper-like wick, and then filled a small vessel with clear, fresh lard. What a joy, when the taper was lighted and a steady, bright flame told of His Presence! Yet never before did Mother feel the sting of poverty as she did at this moment. With tear-dimmed eyes she took up the light with the same ardor with which she would have taken her own heart, and bore it to the chapel. Here she placed it close to the

tabernacle where was beating the Heart of her God. "Accept, dearest Lord," said she in accents of joy and of sadness, "this poor symbol of love. You know that it is the best we can give for the present. But if You will bless and prosper the community we will some day introduce the Perpetual Adoration of your Sacramental Presence and erect a chapel, a temple beautiful and costly. And we know that You will help us as only a God can help His handmaids."

Ah, dear, provident Mother Antonia! We have seen the glorious realization of your ceaseless petitions. Your voice touches our innermost being, and our love for Jesus in the Blessed Eucharist bursts forth in an exulting "Magnificat."

Thirteen years elapsed before the establishment of the Perpetual Adoration. During that interval each St. Joseph's Day was hallowed by Eucharistic exposition and adoration and was ever filled with bright hopes and holy joys. And now, that the one hope of those thirteen years of ardent longing has been realized by the gloriously established Perpetual Adoration, each day of unbroken prayer is, as it were, a tribute also to St. Joseph, and his feast-day is always a day of recreation for the Sisters on which "each one may heartily enjoy herself, provided she sin not."

If, in the days of the Israelites, the blood on the doorposts kept the destroying angel from the families that were faithful to the Lord's command — in our times, the burning of the little lard light in the saucer on each recurring St. Joseph's Day, marks those houses of the Sisterhood that are zealous in keeping alive the beautiful traditions of the first Eucharistic Presence and the first day's adoration in the Motherhouse of the community. The present that forgets its hallowed past can hope for no joyful future. Far be it from the Francis-

can Sisters of the Perpetual Adoration to forget their past, particularly that event which was the harbinger of the Perpetual Adoration. To procure this singular favor of the uninterrupted exposition and worship of the Blessed Sacrament in the Motherhouse, the Sisters of those early days cheerfully saved every hard-earned penny, gladly suffered incredulous privations, and denied themselves everything except the bare necessaries of life. With this exalted hope ever glowing in their warm hearts and leading them on like the star of the Magi, they cheerfully bore the burdens of the day, trusting steadfastly that eventually it would be their privilege to kneel before Bethlehem's Babe — not as of old in His lowly manger, but enthroned in a chapel worthy of His Majesty to receive there a homage that never ceases.

What a picture this chapter presents, a picture engraved on our hearts by the Guest, the Divine Benefactor! St. Coletta's poor parlor as chapel festooned with spruce boughs fresh from the forest! Sweet Jesus enthroned on His Holy of Holies, much as He was in the manger! Mother Antonia with her lard light and the pledge that she plighted! The good Mother long since dead, is, we trust, now in heaven before the Unveiled Presence forever. But away back in the shadows and shades, as it were, of the picture we notice Louisa Keller, the future Mother Ludovica, then just about to cross the threshold of the novitiate. She had seen through the tears that coursed down her cheeks the pains and the anguish of her Mother — the one, after God, she held nearest and dearest on earth, — but little did she dream that it would be hers one day to redeem that "promise." To-day ours is the privilege of knowing how wondrously God has helped her to fulfill that sacred pledge, yea, more — to rejoice in its fulfillment.

What means to us
this blessed little light?
Full many a mem'ry
doth each beam recall,
Of joy, of love, yea, e'en of sorrow's night,
When Poverty beneath its shielding pall
Most sweetly proved the faith of hearts so brave
In Him Who ne'er deserts His chosen band,
Who, though He seemed so far away, yet gave
The grace and courage ever firm to stand.
Some fifty years have since then slipped away;
But on each feast of our St. Joseph dear,
A tiny light, just such as burned that day,
Retells a holy tale we all revere.
Our Adoration now through day and night
Had its beginning
in this little light.

And as for Mother Ludovica, among her many achievements, the one which undoubtedly brings her the greatest consolation is the completion of the Chapel of the Perpetual Adoration. It was built through the sweat, the labors and the privations of the Sisters, many of whom have gone or are now fast going before us. To Mother Antonia, as to many of her companions, it was given only to dream golden dreams of the joys they have won for us. May we, too, through our love and devotion for Jesus, the Eucharistic Victim, be permitted like them to dream of endless blessings we are winning for ourselves and for all generations!

CHAPTER IX

THE COMMUNITY ENJOYS A TEMPORARY GLEAM OF PROSPERITY

St. Joseph's Day, 1865, we have seen, marked the beginning of a new era in the history of our community. With Jesus now in the midst of them, everything assumed a brighter aspect for the Sisters at St. Coletta Convent.

Though hardships and trials were still to be borne, the bright light of grace radiating from the little Holy of Holies taught the Sisters to bear toil by toiling, and suffering by suffering. Thus they converted life's thorns into heavenly roses which they laid each day at the foot of the tabernacle. With this new spiritual joy, also came a promise of material prosperity for the community. Vocations were numerous; but the increase of new members could not meet the marked increase of demands for teachers.

At length April showers and May sunshine were preparing the soil for the plow, and the good St. Lawrence parishioners, banding together, agreed to put in the crop for the Sisters gratuitously. The Convent farm, orchard, and garden, therefore, presented busy scenes for several days, and not the least active among the workers were the Sisters and Postulants. Some of them dropped the golden kernels of corn into the furrows made by the farmers, others followed, hoe in hand, for the covering. What all this meant to the community at that time, we can appreciate when we remember that

just now, at the close of the great Civil War, laborers were few, provisions in great demand, and prices fabulously high.

While the farmers and the Sisters were thus busied about the temporal needs of the community, Mother Antonia, who believed in being "a religious first" and "a business woman after," was zealously concerned about the spiritual affairs of the Convent. In this important matter, she ever found a support in Father Heiss. He espoused every interest of the community, forestalled difficulties, took a personal interest in each individual, was even solicitous about the details of each mission; in fine, he was a saintly counselor, a loyal friend, and a valiant guardian of the Sisterhood, whom he fondly spoke of as "my Sisters." One of his greatest benefactions came to them in May of this propitious year, 1865.

Father Flasch began to suffer from declining health. The physician prescribed rest and a trip away from the scene of his labors. The Father Rector did not bethink himself long, but urged Bishop Henni to send Father Flasch to the Convent at Jefferson as chaplain. His Lordship graciously followed this suggestion. Thus God once more brought His designs to pass seemingly by accident. But was this singular manner of taking "rest and a vacation trip" according to Father Flasch's tastes? We are glad to say that it was. Fathers Heiss and Flasch were always intimate friends. One of the ties that united so closely these two great men was their common interest in the welfare of the struggling Sisterhood at Jefferson. Father Flasch was welcomed with joy by the Sisters to whom he seemed like a guardian angel come to shed the warmth of God's holy love into their lives.

Father Kilian Flasch was distinguished by charming

simplicity, generous human sympathies, great nobility of soul and breadth of mind. Gentle in manner, he was resolute in deed. He possessed also the gift of making himself at home everywhere. "At home" he certainly was at St. Coletta's. Two narrow cells and an adjacent small sitting room were placed at his disposal. Here he abode and willingly shared the discomforts and privations of the community.

The Sisters could now assist daily at Holy Mass and receive Holy Communion as frequently as permitted in those days — three times a week, or four times, if a special feast intervened. How refreshing these showers of grace after nearly a year of spiritual drought!

Before long, Father Flasch organized the Sisters and Postulants into regular summer school classes, and gave lessons in the elementary subjects. The Sisters destined for teaching were now in their element, and thought that they had nothing further to wish for, except the power to fold up the wings of time, and to spare from their studies not even one precious moment for those varied household duties.

Father Flasch was an advocate of the principle:

"A school without song
Cannot prosper long."

He included, therefore, a period for singing in his program. Most of his pupils were now in a doleful plight. Some of them had not been gifted by nature with an ear for music, while the latent talent of others had not been developed in childhood. Regardless of the fact, Father Flasch gathered all about the melodeon in his room and seated himself at the instrument. It is well nigh impossible to portray here that picture. Grave and intent, a professor, every inch — Father

Flasch played and sang through the first stanza of the old hymn:

"Mutter Gottes, duerfen Suender,
Duerfen arme Menschenkinder,
Dir auch wohl ein Loblied weih'n,
Da sich deiner Engel freu'n?"

"Holy Mother, will you mind it,
If the sinner e'er shall find it
His best joy to love and praise thee,
Queen of Angels, e'er to praise thee?"

"Now you sing," said Father Flasch to the class with an encouraging nod of the head and a lively start upon the instrument. Not one voice responded to his effort. Again he struck the pitch note, and again he nodded, this time with a mandate! "Now sing!" But again, though he urged them on with a coaxing start, all remained nervously mute. Assuming a somewhat sterner attitude, he now turned his head in the direction of the pupils with a solemn: "You must sing in holy obedience." This time his earnest endeavors were rewarded with some sort of a vocal strain, which was neither song nor speech. A smile wreathed Father Flasch's face, but only for an instant. "With what devotion ought you to sing!" came the slowly enunciated, gentle admonition. At once all recovered their gravity. For the fourth time the patient Father Flasch tried to coax the musical cords of his pupils into action, but with no better results.

One does not know which to admire more, the simple dignity of the teacher or the awkward attempts of the pupils trying in vain to call into being a talent which the Master had not entrusted to them. Nevertheless, Father Flasch announced at the end of the third exer-

cise that at the next practice each one must sing alone. What an alarming notification! How dreaded the anticipation! And how "awful" the reality! The scale was sung up and down, and down and up, and in between, with such palpitating and woeful harmonizing as might have pained even the most unmusical ear. Though the patience of the teacher remained unruffled, the "finale" was a tearful "miserere" for several of the singers.

One day when it was thought that Father Flasch had gone for a stroll in the woods, as was his custom, Sister Cecilia gathered the class about the melodeon in his room to help them along by a little extra application. "Now try your best," admonished she, "so you don't appear quite so stupid when Father Flasch gives you the next lesson." A spirit of mischief had, however, taken possession of the teacher as well as the pupils. There were droll remarks and outbursts of hilarity. Finally, Sister Cecilia, carried away on the spur of the moment, sang the first stanza of the old hymn through, wording it thus:

"Mutter Gottes duerfen Suender,
Duerfen Vater Flaschen's Kinder,
Dir auch wohl ein Loblied weih'n,
Da sich deiner Engel freu'n?"

"Holy Mother, will you mind it?—
Father Flasch's children find it
Their best joy to love and praise thee,
Queen of heaven, they would praise thee."

The pupils entered lively upon the idea, but scarcely had the last note died away, when it dawned upon one of them startlingly: "Suppose Father Flasch is resting in his sitting room?" Suddenly the shadow of the tall,

gentle Father fell on the melodeon! And away fled teacher and pupils!

Doubtless, the good-natured Father Flasch enjoyed behind the scenes this little act; but his lofty sense of dignity never permitted him to allude to it; and the artless mischiefs came out of it all, quite unscathed, except for the keen smart of the well merited mortification.

Knowing that Father Flasch would sooner or later be recalled to the Seminary, Mother Antonia anticipated dark days for the community upon the event of his departure. She, consequently, bethought herself of the Confessor of her former days, Father Xavier Obermueller. Father Obermueller was one of the first priests ordained by Bishop Henni in 1846; and he had labored as pioneer priest in the neighboring missions of Milwaukee until called to Europe, on some family affairs. On his return to America he associated himself with the Fathers of the Precious Blood in Ohio, shared in their missionary labors, and was appointed pastor of St. Mary's Church in Cleveland. At this stage of our history he was pastor at Norwalk, Ohio. Mother Antonia held him in great esteem as a remarkably spiritual man. His sojourn in another diocese suggested to her the possibility of influencing him to accept the Convent chaplaincy.

There was, however, besides this, another affair which needed immediate attention. What it was we shall presently see. Mother Antonia's brother, Joseph Leinfelder, dwelt on a farm at Elyria, Ohio. He was skilled as a carpenter; and she entertained the hope that she might persuade him to move with his family to Jefferson, there to attend to the building of an ad-

dition to the Convent, and ultimately also to the supervision of the farm.

With this two-fold end in view, Mother Antonia decided on a visit to Father Obermueller at Norwalk and to her family at Elyria. Poverty-stricken as the community was, she considered that Louisa Keller's parents at Norwalk would gladly pay their daughter's traveling expense, should she give them the pleasure of a visit. Mother Antonia, therefore, chose Louisa as a companion, and the two started out for Norwalk during the early part of June. Arriving there, they called at the parsonage where they were warmly received by their revered and saintly guide of former days. The good priest rejoiced over the unexpected meeting, and would have been delighted to proceed at once to Jefferson to minister to the wants of the little Franciscan community. But he could not possibly vacate his pastorate without the consent of Bishop Rappe, which he knew would not easily be obtained.

Mother Antonia consequently went directly to Cleveland to confer with the Bishop. She and Louisa reached there during the afternoon and had the good fortune of having an audience with His Lordship that very evening. The Prelate was in most respects a typical Frenchman, of tall stature and very active demeanor. No sooner had Mother Antonia informed him of the nature of her errand, than he broke forth vehemently, "No, no; you want my best priest. Let your own Bishop give you a priest."

"But, Right Reverend Bishop," argued Mother Antonia, "We will establish a perpetual prayer for you in the community if you grant us this favor."

"No, no," expostulated Bishop Rappe, "you have to pray for me anyhow. — Do you know a place at which to stay to-night? I will give you a recommendation."

Thus politely dismissed, Mother Antonia expressed her thanks and withdrew with her companion. Suspending, for the time being, every further proceeding relative to this matter so dear to her heart, she went on to her parental home at Elyria. Louisa Keller likewise sought the family hearth of her childhood at Peru, some distance out from Norwalk. She was to remain there until Mother Antonia should return. During this interval of happy reunion, Louisa was joined by two new postulants, her own younger sister, Julia, and Mary Schmidt, a girl from one of Father Obermueller's missions.

Mother Antonia meanwhile made arrangements with her brother to follow her with his family to Jefferson. Having thus disposed of her twofold mission, she immediately returned to Norwalk, whence, joined by the three postulants, she set out for St. Coletta's, where she arrived about the middle of June.

Plans for the new building were at once drawn, and preparations made for its erection. The small one-story wing, shown on the picture of primitive St. Coletta's, was torn down; and the kitchen stove was set up under an apple tree until the completion of a temporary shelter. Can you picture the Sisters preparing Father Flasch's frugal meals under the wide-spreading apple tree, and handing them in to him through the window? On rainy days, the good priest waited patiently with the rest of the household until the fire could be rekindled. How true the maxim: "A wise man fitteth himself into circumstances easily, cheerfully, and wholly." Is not such an example like a refreshing oasis in the desert of life? Our community has the happiness of holding in traditional reverence the names of several whose greatest excellence was their charming simplicity — Father Heiss, Father Flasch, and one

whom we shall presently introduce to our readers, Father Obermueller.

Need we wonder that Mother Antonia, with Father Flasch as guest in the house for the summer, felt that the training and guidance of the Sisters was in the best hands? She was, therefore, free to put forth all her efforts toward the speedy erection of the new building. Mr. Leinfelder arrived in due time, and work was begun in earnest. In order to push it forward with the desired rapidity, Mother Antonia needed money, but the convent purse was in the faithful keeping of Lady Poverty. The idea of a loan seemed appalling to her, yet she finally resigned herself to the inevitable and borrowed eight hundred dollars. Acting upon the advice of Bishop Henni, she had sent out two Sisters in the early spring to solicit alms for the building. These Sisters could be spared for this purpose only a few weeks. Later in the year, however, Sisters Lidwina and Veronica again went forth on the same errand, and made a third tour in the following year. The mendicants found the people exceedingly kind and liberal, some of them giving even their "widow's mite."

The sum total collected by the Sisters amounted to about three thousand dollars. This is the only time in its history, however, that the community has depended upon loans, alms, or donations for building and other material improvements. The seal of holy poverty was stamped upon the Congregation from the beginning. Its present modest resources and freedom from debt must be ascribed solely to the blessing of God upon the hard-earned pennies, coming in one by one, as it were, from the missions. Withal, it must be admitted that St. Joseph, like unto Elias in the days of the widow of Sarepta, often saw to it that "the pot of meal did not

waste, nor the cruse of oil diminish," until some poor mission house would send in its monthly pittance.

But we are again digressing from our subject. In spirit, we return to Jefferson and find that the work on the building has progressed with gratifying speed while that in the fields has kept pace with it. Again and again during the spring, summer, and autumn of 1865, did the good farmers lend their whole-hearted assistance to the Convent, yet the work was so pressing and manifold that Father Flasch's classes were more frequently taking lessons in the field than in the classroom. The Sisters arose at a quarter after four each morning, and were about on the farm at the first twittering of the birds, as the summer sun emerged like a plate of gold from his purple-tinted bed on the horizon. Bathed in the soft morning light, the black-veiled Professed Sisters and the white-veiled Novices, with the black-bonneted Postulants among them, appeared from the distance not unlike a mixed flock of black birds and white doves flitting about on the goodly acres of growing corn. Unlike the birds, however, they were not seeking their breakfast; but while they were cultivating the fields for a good harvest, they were likewise preparing the soil of their own hearts to yield fruit a hundredfold for the Divine Sower.

Through all this novel manner of life on the Jefferson farm, we need not be told that the Sisters had ample opportunity to practice self-denial. Many of that worthy band of young women were not accustomed to these laborious occupations. They secretly congratulated themselves on the good fortune of being so far away from their homes. How mortifying they would have found it to be surprised by the sudden visit of a relative! The unaccustomed strain also told hard on the physical strength of the faithful work-

ers — all the more so, because their daily bread was measured out to them on the scales of austere poverty.

If, however, the work in the open air was taxing, it had also its enjoyable phases. Those who had grown up on the farm taught their lore to the others. There were naïve and charming pleasantries. Each awkward attempt occasioned a ripple of merriment; a slight discomfort added new zest to the novel occupation. And, oh, the charms of God's marvelous creation for these daughters of the nature-loving St. Francis! The fresh, sweet-scented air, the enchanting music pouring forth from the throats of the feathered warblers, the rare views of sun-gilded farm lands and orchards; the vaulted sky with its varying glows and hues from fleecy white to golden yellow —all these charms lifted their souls to heaven rather than held them spellbound to the earth upon which they trod. And turning from the beauteous creation to seek the Creator, the Sisters could not help feeling truly happy, though they were, indeed, crucified spouses of the crucified Jesus. Even after the lapse of many years, when speaking of these times the Sisters exclaimed: "Oh, those early, happy days! Oh, those happy, early days! Our joys were many; our fatigues and privations were but pledges of Divine predilection!"

While the community was thus variously employed, time winged its speedy flight, and the bountiful summer of 1865 ripened into a glorious autumn which was just beginning to blanch into snowy winter, when on November 21, the Feast of the Presentation, the handsome new brick Convent, completed and occupied, threw open the doors of its large chapel room for a joyful nuptial celebration.

The old melodeon reverberates a sweet modulation and the choir sings the "Veni, Sancte Spiritus." The

moment for the sermon has arrived. A priest, reverent and saintly in manner, turns to his expectant hearers with the fitting text, "To-day salvation is come to this house." Who is this minister of heaven so unpresuming and simple and yet so fervently eloquent? Let us ask Mother Antonia or the new novices from Norwalk.

"It is Father Obermueller!" they tell us.

Has he come to stay? — Has Bishop Rappe relented and relieved him of his parish? — Not yet. Father Obermueller has merely accepted Mother Antonia's invitation, and has appeared on this festive occasion to manifest to his three parish children — Sister Ludovica, Sister Xavier, and Sister Hieronima — his appreciation of their choice of vocation. But he has also brought the joyful intelligence to the community that he intends to return very soon. What a blessing for the community! And it all came about thus: Mother Antonia had on her return from Norwalk conferred with Father Heiss relative to Father Obermueller's retention there. Father Heiss intimated to Bishop Henni that he might very justly recall Father Obermueller to his own diocese. His Lordship, however, apprehending difficulties, took no action in the matter. Father Heiss hereupon wrote personally to Father Obermueller reminding him of the fact that Bishop Rappe could not, according to Canon Law, retain him against his own will in the Cleveland diocese. He advised him to put all his affairs at Norwalk and the mission in order, and then inform the Bishop of his determination to return to the Milwaukee diocese. Immediately after his return to Norwalk from Jefferson, Father Obermueller sought out Bishop Rappe and told him of his intention. All the necessary provisions for his relinquished parish work were at once made. Bishop Henni, who had been kept informed of these matters by Father Heiss, now

appointed Father Obermueller as Convent chaplain and pastor of the St. Lawrence Congregation. The new chaplain entered upon his duties a few days before Christmas, 1865.

Father Flasch had been recalled to the Seminary in the beginning of the month. The community, thus orphaned, for several weeks, welcomed the new chaplain with great joy, while he himself felt that he had come unto his own.

Did Christmas Day, think you, ever dawn more gloriously upon St. Coletta Convent or upon St. Lawrence Parish? The overjoyed community and parish united in a "Gloria in Excelsis Deo," which, we are sure, was caught up by the angels and sent reverberating

> "High as the Heavens, wide as the earth,
> Swelling the hymn of the Savior's birth."

REV. FRANCIS X. OBERMUELLER

CHAPTER X

SPIRIT OF THE COMMUNITY

Well might the community rejoice and glorify God on that ever memorable Christmas of 1865; for it could on this day at length look back on the realization of several of its fondest hopes. A Motherhouse had been established; the Sisters were conducting their schools with gratifying success; vocations were multiplying; and the new missions steadily crowding upon the Sisterhood promised fair to exceed the number of available teachers.

In truth, the little Franciscan family formed, as it were, a fair garden for their Eucharistic Savior. Full oft had He chosen from it a budding rose or a spotless white lily; and neither the chosen nor they that were left ever complained of His holy will. By Him they were planted and nourished, as they were frequently reminded by the good Father Chaplain, and for Him they must ever be ready, whether He deigns to come in the dewy morning or at high noontime or in the late starry evening when the long day of maturing is over.

The days at dear St. Coletta were filled with duties and hopes and fears, but it must be noted here that the young teachers in training were becoming more than ever thrilled with enthusiasm for the work of the classroom. Father Obermueller was a pedagogue in the truest sense of the word. He usually taught during the morning hours, while Sister Bonaventure Lamb, who was an excellent scholar and thoroughly conversant with the English tongue, conducted the afternoon

classes. Their frequent interruption because of the pressing outdoor work sorely tried his usually placid temper, for he well knew how much the Sisters needed study; and Mother Antonia was no less solicitous in this regard. We should have been amused at her simplicity of heart had we been present one day when, with an air of rather anxious concern, she summoned the Sisters. "My dear Sisters," said she by way of explanation, "I have procured a carpet for the sitting room. Fearing that you might consider this unusual luxury a violation of holy poverty, I thought it well to tell you why I incurred this seemingly unnecessary expense. You all know that much time is needed each week to scrub our floors white with our poor bunches of straw and hay (not only were scrubbing brushes lacking, but ashes and sand were used instead of soap). Yet, we must keep the house scrupulously clean because the Lord Jesus dwells with us. My motive, Sisters, in purchasing the carpet was to save you some scrubbing, and thus enable you to devote a little more time to your studies." The Sisters' hearts went out in warm appreciation to their solicitous Mother.

Early in the winter of the year 1865, a school was opened at Town 9, or Germantown, Wisconsin. The more advanced department of this school of two rooms was a district school; the other was supported by the parish. Sister Agnes was appointed to teach the public school, and was accordingly obliged to pass the examination for a county certificate. She proceeded to West Bend, Wisconsin, for the purpose, but not without some degree of warranted anxiety, for she felt that her opportunities for an education had been comparatively meager. The result of the examination, however, thanks to St. Joseph and her own earnest preparation,

was very satisfactory. Sister Agnes was not slow to impart the glad news to Mother Antonia. The latter responded with an affectionate epistle which, written on very plain note paper, is still preserved in the community as a proof of her maternal solicitude for the success of the Sisters in their schools. It reads as follows:

Jefferson, Jan. 19, 1866.

My dear Sister Agnes,

To God be given praise for your success. God bless you and grant you may do very much for His glory among the "little ones." Cherish your calling of teacher. Ever strive to please your Divine Spouse by imitating His meekness and charity. Then, as He has been with you in this particular instance, He will always be with you and supply what may be wanting in you.

How I would like to visit you, Sister. But I may not risk traveling in this cold weather. God willing, I shall come to see you in the spring. Meanwhile I greet you all many times through the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and remain

With much love and esteem,

Your humble servant,

MOTHER ANTONIA, O.S.F.

In course of time, several other Sisters were obliged to go through the same trying experience as did Sister Agnes, and we are glad to say, never was an attempt in those days at a teachers' public examination attended with failure.

Incidents of this nature and others of equal importance at St. Coletta's were evident proofs that the community was at length alive and doing, breathing a spirit of its own and steadily advancing in the way this spirit led it. In those days, St. Alphonsus Liguori's "True Spouse of Christ," and the "Following of Christ," formed the sole matter for spiritual reading

among the Sisters. The remarkable progress and growth of the community were a source of holy joy to Father Heiss, the founder and spiritual director of the humble little Sisterhood, as also to his co-laborers, the loyal Father Flasch and the pious Father Obermueller. How faithfully they gave themselves to the work without counting the cost, while the community was yet in its infant helplessness! So they now exulted with gladsome joy as the first assuring signs of its safety and prosperity appeared.

The summer of 1866 found the whole community as closely occupied as ever. And we are glad that it was thus. Except for this circumstance, the young aspirants would have felt very keenly a disappointment which fell to their lot. There was no reception to grace the Feast of Portiuncula in 1866; but the second of August of 1867 made up abundantly for the joy they had missed the previous summer. Shall we linger to contemplate this fair scene at St. Coletta's? You know we have been there before on a similar occasion. Even so; let us be present just once more, for the anniversary of this event will be kept with brilliance and splendor fifty years hence.

The community has just closed a fervent retreat conducted by Father Heiss. All in and about St. Coletta's breathes deep recollection. The Sisters are all gathered in the large room that serves as a chapel. The little sanctuary is fittingly adorned. The great moment for the opening of the ceremonies has arrived. Eighteen priests advance devoutly towards the sanctuary. They are obliged to press closely to the altar; for this chapel, though it goes by the name of "large room," is, nevertheless, very small for its purpose. Bishop Henni, arrayed in the full insignia of his episcopal dignity, is attended by Father Heiss and Father

Flasch. He addresses first the seventeen postulants lined up closely to the railless sanctuary, and then the novices right back of them, asking them what they desire. The answer is given clearly. The aspirants then prostrate, profoundly offering themselves as willing holocausts unto the Lord, while the clergy sing the Litany of All Saints.

Each postulant now proceeds to the altar and kneels before the Bishop. The prelate invests her with the humble garb of the Seraphic St. Francis and crowns her white-veiled head with a wreath of red and white roses. Each young novice next emerges from her place into the flickering light of the altar candles, and, kneeling before the Bishop, solemnly pledges herself to the Most High. While the new spouses of the crucified Jesus marvel in loving humility how they should be worthy of so much Divine favor, the Bishop crowns each brow with a circlet of thorns; for innocence crowned by penance is considered by Holy Mother Church the very queenship of virtue. The Bishop now blesses the two bands of happy religious and the whole congregation is noticeably expectant. Doctor Salzmann is to deliver the sermon. The inspiration of the hour lends wings to the great orator's glowing eloquence. He dwells most fervidly on the prerogatives of the religious life — the privilege of belonging to that chosen host that follows the Lamb whithersoever He goeth; the happiness of having no love on earth but one, the love that gladdens our immortal souls for time and for all eternity.

Deeply touched by his earnest words, the young Sisters fall devoutly upon their knees, and during the solemn High Mass remain wrapt in grateful, loving prayer. The sacred moment of Holy Communion arrives. The Father Rector and Father Flasch hold the communion cloth in humble simplicity while the young

religious approach two by two and receive their Eucharistic Lord. What a fair sight, unto which, as Father Faber says, "the Morning Star might sing and the Angels exult." The beautiful solemnity is concluded with the Benediction of the Blessed Sacrament and the Te Deum.

But joy's favorite haunts are often the borderland of sorrow. Dark clouds were meanwhile ascending from the horizon of St. Coletta's. These clouds gradually assumed alarming proportions, threatening to enshroud and bear away that sweet union and submission so characteristic of the young community. Sister Cecilia Jordan, Sister Veronica Mueller, and Sister Augustina Miller, feeling the hardships of those trying days too great for them, withdrew from the community. Their departure was a new trial for the little community, since Sister Veronica was an experienced teacher and Sister Cecilia seemed indispensable as organist. We shall be more prone to pity, however, than to censure them if we remember that the trials of those days were particularly severe. Hard manual labor has been frequently referred to, and as to the pangs of hunger, a fast day of our time strictly kept gives us but a faint idea of what their usual diet then meant, for even on fast days we have one full meal such as our pioneer Sisters seldom ate. Imagine them strenuously occupied from a quarter past four in the morning until noon day — and their breakfast, a small piece of dry bread and a cup of rye or barley coffee. Or picture the same nuns modestly seated on both sides of a long table for the midday repast. A large dish of boiled potatoes and rye bread constitute the entire meal. As these are passed down the ranks, the Sisters take but sparingly of each, fearing that the

supply may not be sufficient for all. Despite the precaution, the bowl and the plate are emptied alarmingly fast; and alas! — soon all has disappeared, and several Sisters are doomed to a half-day's fasting. Bravely checking the unbidden tears forced into their eyes by the pangs of hunger, they try to perform all their duties just as if all had been well. We shall have further reason to appreciate the Sisters' patience under hardships and their practice of severe mortifications and self-denial, if we consider that Mother Antonia was a strict disciplinarian, and was particularly averse to all self-indulgence.

The Sisters' greatest worry really was that they might be dismissed and thus singled out as unworthy of the sacred vocation of a religious. They felt, too, that their Mother, after all — her occasional fascinating smile was proof — understood them and was not wanting in sympathy. Besides, were not these mortifications required in the making of Saints? Then, too, the Sisters knew that the actual poverty of the community made it simply impossible to have more than the bare necessaries of life. They knew, too, that every sacrifice cheerfully made was a fervent prayer ascending to the throne of God for the realization of one of the community's most cherished objects — the Perpetual Adoration.

Though we do not wish to intimate that such rigorous austerity is required or even desirable and practicable nowadays, still we must remember that the early years of a community determine its spirit, or true inner life. Our Sisterhood was then in its formative years, and God evidently used Mother Antonia and the Sisters trained in her hard school as instruments to impress upon it the austere spirit which even now animates it. The love of sacrifice, of humility and submission that

makes one be poor and humble, that inclines one to be subject to the will of another for God's sake; that is, the Franciscan spirit. For this spirit, according to which our community has been moulded, we are indebted in the first place to God, and, next to Him, to the example of our pioneer Sisters and the strict discipline enforced by former superiors. What a rich inheritance this spirit is! How much more desirable is it than wealth and distinction! Deep is the debt of gratitude, therefore, the later generations of the Sisterhood owe to those heroic souls, who knew no other rule of life than sacrifice. The memory of them is like a bright lamp that illumines the hallowed courts of our lives.

CHAPTER XI

FATHER HEISS BECOMES BISHOP OF LA CROSSE. DONATION OF LAND FOR A MOTHERHOUSE THERE

It is the 6th of September, 1868. St. John's Cathedral in Milwaukee is to-day the scene of an unusual solemnity for these pioneer days. Thither on the wings of fancy let us go and with that large concourse of people let us witness the consecration of a new Bishop. The solemn ceremony is, indeed, inspiring, yet it is rather the new Bishop himself who attracts and holds our attention; for he is no other than our own Father Heiss. And the little Franciscan Community at St. Coletta's, "my Sisters," as he called them, are right glad over the distinction conferred upon their Spiritual Director by the illustrious Pius IX.

But when Father Heiss took leave of them to repair to La Crosse for his official installation, their congratulation seemed wanting in enthusiasm and an ill-concealed anxiety dimmed the light in their eyes. "Can he continue to be our guide and protector as bishop of another diocese?" was the momentous question that haunted each troubled spirit. But Mother Antonia's genius never failed. "How can the matter be arranged," she would ask herself, "so as to retain Bishop Heiss as the Spiritual Director of the Sisterhood? He has imparted his spirit to us. We are still led by his holy hand and we may falter and fall if he leaves, even as does the toddling child, if the parent hand be withdrawn." She would at least see whether her anxious

apprehensions were not groundless. Sister Mary Barbian at St. Francis Seminary was delegated, therefore, to call on Bishop Henni and petition him to authorize Bishop Heiss to continue as Spiritual Director of the Community.

"Such a regulation would be contrary to the laws of the Church," declared Bishop Henni. "One Bishop cannot exercise jurisdiction in the diocese of another. Personally I shall advance no objection, and, for the time being, the Sisters may still consider Bishop Heiss as having charge of them spiritually."

When Mother Antonia heard Bishop Henni's reply, her resolution was formed. "Transfer the Motherhouse to La Crosse," was her decision, which, however, she judged best to keep secret for a time. Meanwhile, wonderful to say, matters were shaping themselves toward the same end in the very diocese of the new Bishop.

It is a pleasant day of the spring following Bishop Heiss' consecration. La Crosse lies gilded in the mellow rays of the setting sun. A venerable stranger is seen walking along the streets of the little town, seeking out the residence of Bishop Heiss. His rap at the prelate's door is answered by a tall, slender individual, who kindly conducts him to the Bishop's room. What a joyful meeting! — Father Obermueller has come to see Bishop Heiss!

The imposing bearing and refined manners of the gentleman at the door invite acquaintance. Our new friend is Brother Bernard Gerlemann. As a youth, Brother Gerlemann had begun to study for the sacred ministry at the Salesianum, but had been obliged to abandon this ambition because of pulmonary trouble. Acting on the advice of his paternal friend, Father Heiss, he had joined the Capuchins at Calvary, Wisconsin, but his old physical malady reasserting itself,

he had to withdraw from the monastery. The Bishop had then asked Brother Bernard to take up his abode with him at La Crosse. The Brother needed no second bidding. Diligent and prayerful, he spent his days sanctifying himself and making others happy.

While Father Obermueller was still tarrying with Bishop Heiss, several other priests came one day to see the two friends, and Brother Bernard was invited to join the circle. The conversation alternated between the serious and the humorous, drifting from one subject to another, until some one remarked: "What a boon for the diocese, if a community of Sisters would establish its Motherhouse in La Crosse!" Brother Bernard entered eagerly upon the idea. "If there is any prospect of founding a convent in the city," said he, "I am willing to buy at once five lots on Ninth Street, between Market and Winnebago, and donate them to the good cause. These lots sell at one hundred dollars each. I have three hundred dollars on hand, and I am willing to borrow the other two hundred."

The priests doubted the sincerity of Brother Bernard's hasty resolve. But the noble Brother was not in the habit of trifling. He immediately suited his action to his words and purchased the five lots in question. With the sanction of Bishop Heiss, Mother Antonia later bought the remaining seventeen lots of the block including the alley. The Sisters were happy over this acquisition of property, but, with the exception of a few, they never surmised the intended purpose of the enterprise.

Brother Bernard was not content with the mere donation of five lots to the Sisters; he also took it upon himself to build a board fence around the block. He laid out a garden, planted the seventeen lots in corn

and potatoes, and dug a well. Much to his regret, he found that he had not sufficient means to complete the fence and make other contemplated improvements. Circumstances were, however, working providentially into his hands.

Mother Antonia had accepted St. Gabriel's School in Prairie du Chien and had accompanied the Sisters thither in September, 1869. Having heard of Brother Bernard's difficulty, she asked Hon. John Lawler for an advance of two hundred dollars of the Sisters' salary. He willingly acceded and furnished her, besides, two free tickets to go by boat from Prairie du Chien to La Crosse.

Mother Antonia, with Sister Bonaventure Schoeberle as a companion, accordingly took the steamer "Key West" for La Crosse on the evening of that very day. They reached their destination the next morning, a Sunday. Sister Benedicta Wunderly and her postulant companion, who had charge of the household work in the Bishop's residence, warmly welcomed the two weary travelers. But Mother Antonia was impatient to see Bishop Heiss. "He is not at home, Reverend Mother, nor will he return before Thursday," said Sister Benedicta. What a disappointment for Mother Antonia!

She had come to confer with her counselor on many things, and her idle waiting for the return of His Lordship was rendered painful because of her anxiety concerning the school at Prairie du Chien; nevertheless, she went the following Monday to see their new possessions. Let us accompany her and Sister Bonaventure thither. What a lonely scene, that site of the future Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament! The property, a large plot of ground partly tilled, lay

in the midst of a desolate prairie, which stretched north and south as far as the eye could reach. To the east rose a range of picturesque bluffs, and on the west ran the Father of Waters. No habitation relieved the monotonous scene, except to the northwest on the river's bank, where nestled the little town of La Crosse. Geographically, commercially, and socially, La Crosse promised far greater advantages for the foundation of a religious community than Jefferson; but the Sisters' farm and the generous St. Lawrence parishioners would be sadly missed.

As the two nuns picked their way through the sandburs, Mother Antonia clearly foresaw pale specters of hunger and want; but, with faith and unbounded confidence, she soared in spirit to the heavenly throne where she dedicated the new enterprise to the Lord Most High. She lived by faith, — faith was the very life of her life. When her attention once more reverted to the surrounding scenes, her soul was anchored in heavenly peace. She sought Brother Bernard who was digging a well on one of the lots he had purchased for the Sisters. The two conversed most hopefully concerning the prospects for a bright future.

Thursday came at last, and with it the eagerly anticipated return of Bishop Heiss. The transferring of the Motherhouse to La Crosse and the necessary precautions to be taken not to offend Bishop Henni were among the important topics which he then discussed with Mother Antonia. On the succeeding day, she left for Prairie du Chien, whence she returned to Jefferson. Let us, too, return in spirit, for a brief recreation to our dear St. Coletta Convent. How cozy and homelike it seems after our view of the bur-covered prairie.

A new chapel was added to the Convent and was

dedicated under the title of St. Coletta on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 1868. On the same day twenty-two postulants were received into the novitiate. Two days later, these young novices surrounded the deathbed of their teacher, Sister Bonaventure Lamb. "What a group of happy children! Pray for me," whispered the dying Sister. She expired shortly after with: "My Jesus, mercy!" on her lips. All too early was she called to her eternal reward, but she leaves a name that we all hold in benediction. Sister Anastasia Knox succeeded the departed as teacher in the Motherhouse.

On the Feast of the Portiuncula, 1869, only seven months after the reception on the 8th of December, another class of postulants, twelve in number, received the habit and veil. Again on the Feast of the Portiuncula, 1870, the class of novices that had the happiness of being received at the dedication of the St. Coletta Chapel on the Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 1868, enjoyed a second distinction, that of pronouncing their vows at St. Francis, the place rendered sacred to memory by the first plighting of vows in the Community of Mother Aemiliana and her companions, seventeen years earlier. While these new members were strengthening the ranks of the Sisterhood, God took to Himself Sister Anastasia Knox, the directress of the Convent school. She went to her eternal reward, Feb. 12, 1871. A fair holocaust, immolated unto the Lord by the ravages of consumption, she continues to live in memory as "a very mortified religious."

Though these details may seem more or less monotonous to the reader, they serve not only to complete our history but to illustrate also its rapid growth between the years 1868-1870. The seed planted two decades earlier by the six founders and watered by the

sweat of their brow, was fast growing into that "hardy tree in the shelter of which the Eucharistic God would vouchsafe to dwell and be worshiped in Perpetual Adoration."

Vacation days had now become occasions of notable gatherings and happy reunions of the Sisters at St. Coletta Convent. It does not require much imagination to portray the eager joy with which our pioneer Sisters hastened home for vacation. In this one point, at least, the later generations are as good as their elder Sisters. A zealous parish priest once complained to Bishop Heiss concerning this attachment of the Sisters to the Motherhouse. "Scarcely has the school closed," said he, "when home they go, as if all the world were nothing besides." A smile lighted up Bishop Heiss' features as he answered: "Thus it should be. Such complaints give me great pleasure." What a good, wise spiritual Father! How well he understood!

Prayer, study, and labor filled the vacation days at St. Coletta's. During recreation the Sisters entertained one another with the recital of mission experiences. Sequestered nooks in the shady wood near by were inviting places for these pleasant hours. The call for work in the field was always responded to in a spirit of penance; nevertheless, it was often converted into pleasant recreation.

When the day's work was done and the good-night prayers to their Sacramental Jesus were said, all betook themselves to rest. Those who chanced to have a couch, made good use of it; the rest sought the hayloft where they slept like the Infant Savior on straw and hay, undisturbed by the lowing and neighing of the four-footed tenants below.

On Sunday, after the midday meal, all the Sisters

gathered about Mother Antonia and away to the woods they went. There they praised the Lord with the birds, surprised the sleeping hare, feasted with the squirrel, and enjoyed themselves with the hearts of children.

"The old forgot that they were not young
The young forgot they would e'er be old,
And all the while the trees among,
Where 'er their footsteps strayed or strolled,
Came wittiest word from tireless tongue,
And the merriest peals of laughter rung
Where the woods dropped low and the rocks lay bold."

CHAPTER XII

BISHOP HEISS AT THE VATICAN COUNCIL. MOTHERHOUSE AT LA CROSSE AUTHORIZED

Five years have elapsed since we left St. Francis. Why not wander back in spirit to the dear old place in which our community passed its infancy? It is the 11th of October, 1869. St. Francis is bathed in the mellow radiance of an October sunset. The waves of Lake Michigan break upon the shore with a changeless yet soothing rhythm. Twilight slowly spreads its veil and lures all nature to rest. The soft dusk of evening deepens into night. One by one the stars shine out. Lake Michigan, beautiful by day, presents a charming scene under the wonderful, silvery light of the Queen of Night. We might continue to gaze longer upon this fair picture, but our attention is finally concentrated upon a vessel proudly approaching. Interesting as it is in itself, it is doubly so to us, because of two of its passengers — Bishop Henni and Bishop Heiss. They are on their way to the Eternal City, whither they have been called to attend the Vatican Council. The Sisters at St. Coletta feel lonely, indeed, but they trustfully accompany their spiritual guides on the wings of fervent, persevering prayer.

From New York, Bishop Heiss once more looks back, as it were, with a parting assurance of paternal solicitude. Let us read the letter he sent thence.

New York, October 16, 1869.

Reverend Mother Superior:

Six hours more and I shall be rocking on the ocean. The steamer Lafayette, on which I have engaged passage, will leave at one o'clock P. M. There will be, as I have been informed, nine bishops in all and several priests among the passengers, so I shall not lack good company. Sad news has been received from Europe; namely, that Cardinal Reisach succumbed to a stroke of paralysis on September 14 — at least, so the papers state. Whether he has rallied or not, or how far he has recovered, has not since been reported. It is supposed that word would have reached America by this time, if his case were critical. We will hope for the best; and meanwhile pray that his life may be spared; for, should I not find him among the living any more, I should not only have lost my best patron and protector, but I should also find it very difficult to accomplish at Rome anything in behalf of the Sisters.

I once more bid Father Obermueller and all the Sisters a hearty farewell on this side of the ocean. I trust that He Whom the sea and winds obey will direct me across and also back in safety so that we may have the joy of seeing one another again before long. Nevertheless, if it be not God's will that I return, then I beg only that I be not forgotten in prayer; and that the work begun with the visible assistance and blessing of God — especially the community of Sisters — continue in the same spirit of charity and self-denial as they have hitherto done for the glory of God and the salvation of souls. At the same time I once more thank the Sisters from the depths of my heart for the great consolation they have always given me by their fervor and unfailing harmony among themselves as also for all the kindly services they have rendered me. I give to all my blessing, and remain in the love of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, and under the invocation of all the saints of the Seraphic Order, with sincere esteem

Yours most devotedly in Christ,

MICHAEL HEISS,

Bishop of La Crosse.

P. S.—Greetings to your brother Joseph, to Mr. Jung, and to all the other good people of Jefferson.

A post card written by Bishop Heiss informed us of the safe journey and happy arrival in the Holy City of the two Bishops. About two months later Bishop Heiss wrote as follows to Father Obermueller:

Rome, Feb. 7, 1870.

Reverend and highly esteemed Friend:

It will hardly be necessary to assure your Reverence how often and with what pleasure my thoughts have reverted to Jefferson during my sojourn in Rome. I know that you and the good Sisters have not forgotten me. Our journey hither was very pleasant, as you must have heard; and my location here in Rome, though not as agreeable as one might desire, is at least tolerable. As to the disagreeable — it consists chiefly in the fact that living being so high, I must be very saving; and also in the circumstance that the cold, though I have seen no snow in Rome, affects one severely, since only a few rooms are furnished with a stove or fireplace; but we are told that this cold spell will be over in a few days.

I have meanwhile made the acquaintance of the Father Definitor of the Capuchins and have conferred with him concerning the Sisters' affairs, especially regarding the transfer of the Motherhouse, and the Portiuncula Indulgence for the chapels of the Sisters.

Regarding the transfer of the Motherhouse, he is of the opinion that the Sisters do not owe the same obedience to the Bishop of the diocese that they owe to a Superior. The former's supervision over them extends chiefly to the keeping of the rules; he cannot, therefore, prevent the Sisters from establishing themselves in another diocese, provided the bishop of that diocese approve of the act. He holds, therefore, that the bishop cannot interpose if the Sisters wish to transfer their Motherhouse to another diocese, in the interest of the community — the Franciscans in Austria and Bavaria did the same. Precautions must be taken, however, that the former Motherhouse be put to good use, and that the action be not manifestly detrimental to the diocese of Milwaukee.

I now leave it to your Reverence and to the Mother Superior to determine whether it be advisable to begin the erection of the

Convent at La Crosse before my return. You know how earnestly I desire to have the Motherhouse in La Crosse, should such be possible. But, owing to the impoverished conditions in the city, the Sisters will see pretty hard times, at least at the outstart. I beg, therefore, that all the circumstances connected with a foundation in La Crosse be well considered before beginning to build, lest the Sisters instead of improving their condition, make it worse. Furthermore, I would remark here that it will be necessary meanwhile to keep this letter and its contents secret; and, though you should take steps toward building in La Crosse, do not disclose your purpose of transferring the Motherhouse.

Relative to the Portiuncula Indulgence, the Right Reverend Definitor is of the opinion that the chapels of the Sisters share in the same. But he has not been able to acquire certainty on this point, and therefore advises me to confer with the Congregation of Regulars concerning the matter. I cannot presume to promise myself a favorable answer from the Sacred Congregation. Your Reverence will have read that Cardinal Reisach has died. If he were still living, it would be an easy matter for me to obtain all that the Sisters petition from the Congregation.

Matters referring to religious communities will be considered in the Council. It is supposed that far-reaching modifications are to be made; in particular, that the later communities be united with the older ones. The Franciscans, it seems, have nothing to fear.

As to the probable date of my return, as little can be said now as when I saw you last. The Council is already two months in session, yet not a single decree has been passed. I was appointed "nolens volens" a member of the second Deputatio de Rebus Disciplinae (Deputation Concerning Disciplinary Matters). There are four deputations in all, each of which is composed of twenty-four members, and among whom are three archbishops and three bishops of the United States. These six American prelates, in order of appointment, are the bishops of Baltimore, San Francisco, New York, La Crosse, Buffalo, and Burlington. That I should be chosen, homo novissimus in episcopatu, was a surprise to many, though as far as I perceive, everybody knows that I did not covet such a thing. The nominees proposed by the Americans — the bishops of St. Louis,

Cincinnati, Charleston, Wheeling, and Philadelphia, received but a very small minority of votes.

The grandeur of all the churches, some four hundred in number, is incredible for such as have not seen them. The exterior of most of them is unattractive. The interior of well nigh all of them is lined with the rarest marble from the floor to the ceiling. Yesterday I visited the Passionists, whose founder is St. Paul of the Cross. Their convent, located on a high elevation, rests on the ruins of a spacious building belonging to the palaces of the Roman Caesars. They have a magnificent church dedicated to the holy matryrs Peter and Paul, who dwelt there and suffered martyrdom on the site. The Passionists are now adjoining to this edifice, in honor of their founder, a chapel as large as a church. Its pillars and walls will be of alabaster. Oh, how much I shall have to tell you on my return! Whoever has accustomed himself to the native life of Rome, and this is not an easy matter, can wish for nothing else but to live and die in Rome.

On the feast of St. Francis de Sales, the Holy Father was in the American College; and we breakfasted with him, he seated and we standing. His personal appearance is soul-inspiring. I could not get through contemplating him.

But how are the Sisters? Is Reverend Mother well? She must not die yet; it would be a little too soon. Greet all heartily, and exhort them to pray for my speedy and safe return. It is said that we shall have a three months' vacation during the summer, and resume our work in fall. If so, I will likely spend these three months in Germany.

My hearty greetings to Mr. J. Jung and wife; also to Nick Jung and wife; to Reverend Michael, your brother, should you see him; to Reverend Bernard Beau, Jr.

And now I recommend you to God and to the protection of the Queen of Heaven.

With sincere affection,

Your most devoted friend,

MICHAEL HEISS, Episco.

This letter was an enjoyable surprise to all; but no step was taken to begin work on the new convent, un-

til a second letter arrived. This, dated March 16, 1870, reads as follows:

Italy, Europe.

Reverend Mother Superior:

Praised be Jesus Christ, forever. Amen! Father Obermueller has undoubtedly received my letter wherein I told him that the Roman Definitor of the Capuchins assured me that the Motherhouse could be transferred to La Crosse without any warranted difficulty; and that I would have to refer to the Congregation of Regulars concerning the Portiuncula Indulgence. Since then I have met a Father of the Conventuals of the Franciscan Order, who are called Black Franciscans, because they wear the black habit as do our Sisters. Through this Father, Rev. Leopold Mozygamba, who is an American acquaintance of mine, I gained access to the Superior General of the whole Order of Minor Conventuals of St. Francis. I acquainted him briefly with the conditions of the community and stated its petitions in detail. To-day, to my great joy, I received a document prepared by the General, which I trust will fully satisfy the wishes of the Sisters.

It clearly sets apart in the first place that the General acknowledges and confirms as lawfully erected the Congregation of Sisters of the Third Order recommended by me, the object of which is that the Sisters, while striving after Christian perfection, under the simple vows of obedience, poverty, and chastity, also devote themselves to pious works in schools, orphanages, and hospitals, observing the Rule of St. Francis and the statutes regarding community life, as composed by the Bishop of La Crosse.

Secondly, it states: "We will that the Motherhouse with the Novitiate be founded under the title and invocation of St. Rose of Viterbo in La Crosse."

Thirdly: "The office of rector and visitor of this Congregation we confer upon the Bishop of La Crosse, empowering him to invest, either personally or by a representative, the Sisters with the habit of the Third Order of St. Francis for the Novitiate, and after the space of one year to admit them to the profession of simple vows with all the privileges, indulgences, and graces which the Sisters of the Third Order enjoy."

Fourthly: "Removing all doubt concerning the Portiuncula Indulgence, we declare that this indulgence was granted likewise

for all churches of the Third Order of St. Francis, and that, consequently, all the faithful may gain this indulgence who visit the said churches from Vespers of the Feast of St. Peter's Chains until sunset of the following day; namely, the Second of August."

Fifthly and lastly: "In order that the Sisters may maintain an unbroken union with Our Order, we will and prescribe that they be subject to the Visitation of the Minister General or his commissary; and that they, moreover, acknowledge the General as their lawful Superior and also promise, in making their profession, humbly to obey his commands."

The formula of profession will, consequently, be given me. All this I have black on white before me confirmed by the signature of the **Minister General, Ludovicus Maragoni, Minister Generalis and the seal of the Minister Generalis Ordinis Minorum Conventualium, S. P. N. Francisci.** It seems to me that there remains nothing further to desire. The question now is whether or not La Crosse is the proper place for a Motherhouse. At all events, in my estimation it is as desirable a location as is Jefferson.

Despite the fact that matters are all so firmly established, it is, nevertheless, advisable that the affair be kept secret and that only Father Obermueller and the Sisters of the Council know of it, in order not to offend Bishop Henni unduly. I would suggest that the Sisters build in La Crosse and later on transfer thither the Novitiate and Postulancy. Should Bishop Henni plead against us, we can show him our document from the Superior General. All considered, you might begin to build even before I return, provided you have the means. The formal institution of the Congregation on the now firmly established basis can be effected only on my return. I cannot tell, alas! how soon it will be possible for me to come home; not even whether I shall come this year, since the end of the Council cannot be conjectured; and, before its close, I cannot hope to be relieved since I belong to a deputation.

As to my personal comfort, I am faring well; God be praised! I am now living all alone near the Vatican and the Church of St. Peter. Oh! what a church! Assuredly nothing upon this earth can compare with it! Recently I took a walk with Father Leopold around the walls of the Vatican. It required between

three and four hours. And besides St. Peter's, how many other magnificent churches! In all there are not less than four hundred, to say nothing of the countless sanctuaries, such as the graves of St. Peter, St. Paul, St. Lawrence, St. Sebastian, St. Agnes, St. Prisca, St. Alexius, St. Bibiana, St. Cecilia, St. Pancratius, and numberless other saints.

Four times I visited the Catacombs, or subterranean burial places of the early Christians, which also served during times of persecution as places for Divine worship. The entrance leads deep into the earth where countless passages branch off to the right and to the left. On both sides of these, the graves are cut into the soft stone. A vial of blood distinguishes the martyrs' graves from those of other Christians. Oh, how one's heart quickens when he chances upon a passage where graves are ranged on both sides in long rows, and finds the vials near these graves containing, still clearly visible, the dried-up blood which these early martyrs shed for their faith!

The Franciscans and Capuchins have many churches here. Of late I have also visited a church near which our Holy Father Francis dwelt for a long time. During the last fourteen days I have been almost continually at home, or rather, in the library of the Franciscans who live close by, and who act as Father Confessors to the various nationalities attending St. Peter's.

The Council is not proceeding as well as one would wish. How fervently we ought to pray that out of so much labor great blessings may come forth for the whole Church!

I have seen the Holy Father often and have had the privilege of kissing his hand and foot four times. He included in his blessing all in my charge and all my acquaintances, consequently also the Sisters.

I am very curious to learn how matters are shaping themselves in Prairie du Chien. Should Father Obermueller not have written yet, urge him to do so; or, why not write yourself? Evidently, I shall not succeed in procuring the Jesuits for Prairie du Chien — may be, however, I can get the Franciscans.

I should likewise be pleased to hear how things are faring at Dubuque. Above all, it will interest me to know how the Sisters are doing. Are they all well, and truly fervent and happy in their labors of charity? Will you greet them all very heartily for me? Tell them not to forget, even for one day, that God has called them, in His great mercy, to serve Him in a state of per-

fection, to sanctify themselves, to labor and suffer for His glory and the salvation of souls purchased by His Blood; and then, after a little while, to rejoice with Him eternally in the companionship of all the angels and saints in Heaven, especially the Blessed Mother of God, the Virgin of Virgins. It is certainly a great solace for me in life, and will be also in death, to know that, for the small services I have rendered the Sisters, they will not forget to pray for me during my mortal career and that those who die before me and attain to the beatific vision will remember me also in Heaven.

Very hearty greetings to my loved and noble, priestly friend, Father Obermueller, also to your brother and your good mother, of whom I am often reminded by the red stockings she knitted for me. And for yourself I wish as much health as is necessary for the welfare of the Sisters.

United in the love of Jesus and His Blessed Mother and our Holy Father St. Francis.

Yours devotedly in Xto,

MICHAEL HEISS, Episc.

N. B.—For the Father General, the Sisters must also pray, and for Father Leopold who will supply us with relics for our new Convent of St. Rose de Viterbo.

Upon receipt of this letter, Mother Antonia, animated by her never failing trust in God, promptly consulted the Sisters, and then, in company with her brother, Mr. Leinfelder, the architect, and Father Obermueller, set out for La Crosse. All the necessary specifications were at once drawn up, and Mr. Leinfelder was given the contract for the building of the new convent.

In June the following letter was received from Bishop Heiss:

Rome, June 12, 1870.

Reverend Mother Superior:

On the eve of St. Anthony, your Patron Saint, I write these lines from the one — Eternal Rome, the city of the holy Apostles Peter and Paul, and of so many martyrs and confessors, — to wish you on your Saint's Day from all my heart God's grace

and blessing, and especially that you may continue to walk courageously the way of the cross, and that by greater sanctity every day and a more perfect self-denial, bring the work which the Lord has entrusted to you to greater interior and exterior perfection, thus gaining many merits for Heaven, — yes such an abundance, that you can grant me a share in them. Oh what joy, what bliss in Heaven, if we shall once be found faithful servants! May St. Anthony, with St. Francis and all the saints of the Seraphic Order be our intercessors and acknowledge and present to the Lord all that we have done on earth. To-morrow I shall offer Holy Mass for you and all the Sisters.

Many thanks for the check sent through Reverend Obermueller. I am very economical and yet spend much. May God by His blessing richly requite the generous gift.

It pleased me much that you and the Reverend Obermueller have been at La Crosse to make arrangements for the building of the convent. From Father Kampschroer's letter I must infer that the prospects in La Crosse are still very poor. Money seems to be getting scarcer every day. We will, however, hope for better times; besides, the convent is not dependent on La Crosse alone.

What a joy it would be to me, if, as you hope, the convent would really be completed for the Feast of the Portiuncula next year, and I should by that time be in La Crosse again! I shall hardly return home this year, since the proceedings of the Council advance so slowly. I fear that the Sisters do not pray hard enough. In July I hope we shall be given a vacation which is to last until October. Then I shall travel to Germany, for which purpose I have saved your check. But I have become a stranger in my native home. In spite of its privation and hardships. America is the land of my choice. Oh, could I but journey to Jefferson for my vacation, I should then entertain no thought of Germany.

By the way, I must after all trouble you with regard to the Swiss religious, though not so much as I had expected. They wish to send only six or eight Sisters at first, who are to seek out a place in the diocese of La Crosse or of Milwaukee. Only after these Sisters will have made all necessary preparations, will the rest of them follow.

As to the reception and profession of the Postulants and

Novices for this year, you may act as you think best. The new order will not effect much of a change in these instances, except that it will render matters more simple and permanent.

And now, my very hearty greetings to the Sisters in the Seminary, in the Orphan Home, at Jefferson, and in whatever other place they may be. To God be praise and glory for the happy fact that the community is doing so well. You must urgently exhort the Sisters that, while devoting themselves to their manifold duties, they should not forget the interior life — entire forgetfulness of self in the service of God; purity of heart, purity of intention in their demeanor and actions. Living thus, they will always fare well.

Greetings to your good mother and to Joseph. Recommending myself to the prayers of all, I remain with unfailing devotion,

Yours in gratitude,

MICHAEL HEISS, Episc.

CHAPTER XIII

THE MOTHERHOUSE TRANSFERRED TO LA CROSSE

"What a joy it would be to me if, as you hope, the convent would really be completed by the Feast of the Portiuncula next year; and if I could by that time be in La Crosse again!" Thus wrote Bishop Heiss from Rome on the eve of the Feast of St. Anthony, 1870. These words struck a responsive chord in the hearts of all at Jefferson, and great was the impetus they gave to the building of the new Motherhouse. The location of St. Coletta Convent, it will be remembered, was determined by the force of circumstances rather than by actual choice on Mother Antonia's part. Had the good Mother been perfectly free to choose, she would undoubtedly have selected a site in town. To begin with, the farm work at Jefferson was incompatible with the training of teachers, while the lack of railroad facilities alone would have been sufficient reason for seeking a location near a station. A two-mile walk in the dead of night for the Sisters returning from a mission was but one of the many undesirable features of an out-of-town location. The little community at St. Coletta, therefore, now stormed Heaven to speed with its blessing the erection of their new convent.

Yet it was not until March, when spring was singing its dirge over the winter of 1870, that Mr. Leinfelder was provided with specifications and given orders to plant St. Rose de Viterbo Convent among the weeds of the lonely prairie. The brilliant August sun was, nevertheless, still shining upon the weather-worn bluffs

and the undulating valley, when the foundation of the new cloister could be traced in extensive outline of solid masonry; and when, on August 21, 1870, the double feast of Saints Joachim and Jane de Chantal dawned, all La Crosse rose to do honor to the eventful day. Out upon the lonely prairie they thronged. In full view of this concourse of enthusiastic people, with the blue canopy of heaven above him, and the morning sun pouring a flood of light upon the whole region, Father Obermueller solemnly laid the corner stone of the convent that was to take the place of the Motherhouse at Jefferson. In the corner stone was deposited the following document written in Latin:

"All to the Greater Glory of God!"

In the year of our Lord 1870, on the 21st day of August, in the 96th year after the Declaration of Independence of the United States of North America, in the 25th year of the glorious Pontificate of Pope Pius IX., in the 2nd year of the (Ecumenical) Vatican Council in Rome, in the 3rd after the consecration of Right Reverend Michael Heiss, the first bishop of La Crosse, U. S. Grant being President of the United States, Lucius Fairchild, Governor of the state of Wisconsin, Theo. Rodolf, Mayor of this city of La Crosse, Venerable Mother Antonia Herb, Mother Superior of this Convent, in the name of the Most High and the Blessed Trinity, under the invocation of Mary, ever Blessed Virgin, conceived without sin, and of the Blessed Rose of Viterbo and all the Saints, the corner stone of the Convent of the Sisters of St. Francis, was, according to the Roman Catholic rites, blessed and laid by the Very Reverend Father Francis Xavier Obermueller, after being empowered by the Right Reverend Bishop of this diocese, assisted by the Reverend Fathers Henry Kampschroer and James Schwebach, and in the presence of a vast multitude."

Father James Schwebach, later Bishop of La Crosse, and Father Henry Kampschroer, pastor of St. Joseph's

Cathedral, delivered the discourses of the day. Animated with a glowing enthusiasm for the great cause, they both made a profound impression on their listeners and won for the Sisters a number of friends who have ever since proved themselves most devoted.

Mother Antonia and Sister Ottilia represented the Sisterhood at the celebration. Meanwhile, the Community at St. Coletta Convent knelt before the tabernacle, pouring forth canticles of praise, of thanksgiving, and of petition to Him Who inspired the Sisters in this as in all other good works. "Except the Lord build the house, they labor in vain that build it."

But the builders of St. Rose Convent labored not in vain. Mr. Leinfelder was a man of strong faith and practical piety. From motives of faith he, like Brother Bernard, was magnanimous in his services for the Sisters. Both of these worthy men, by their support of the community in its days of distress and struggle, have won for themselves a continual remembrance in the prayers said for our benefactors during each hour of the Perpetual Adoration.

Before beginning in good earnest to build, Mr. Leinfelder speedily constructed the small cottage still standing close to the eastern enclosure of St. Rose Convent garden. Hither came his family except his aged mother. She remained at Jefferson, residing in a small room in the Convent, whence the Angel of Death summoned her a little later to receive her reward. In the meantime, Mr. Leinfelder and his family established themselves in their new home. The architect was now free to enter upon his great work. He was a self-made expert. Skillful, accurate, and inventive, he threw such positive vim into his work, that when the next spring was about to yield to the summer of 1871, the spacious

brick building stood at last upon the wide-spreading prairie. As the building progressed, there sprang up, undoubtedly, in the heart of the architect the desire that some of his daughters should come to dwell within its sacred precincts. It was with joy, therefore, that the pious man saw his two daughters, Sisters Clara and Cherubine, place themselves under the direction of his sister, Mother Antonia, and consecrate their young lives to the Most High.

Faithful to Bishop Heiss' counsels, Mother Antonia had made no allusion outside of the community to the contemplated transferring of the Motherhouse to La Crosse. Her cautious proceeding prevented the trouble the good Bishop had hoped thus to forestall, but it could not dispel storm clouds that gathered from another direction. The Vicar General, Right Reverend Martin Kundig, and his consultors pronounced Mother Antonia's action as high-handed in the extreme. Not only they but many other priests, especially those in the Seminary, expressed themselves as being shocked by her manner of proceeding in the absence of Bishop Henni. In short, the undertaking was strenuously opposed and Mother Antonia openly denounced as a deserter. A letter to this effect was forwarded to Bishop Heiss.

Poor Mother Antonia! "Beloved Cross, receive me into thy arms and bring me to my God," prayed she. Thus millions of others have prayed since the crucifixion on Calvary, and have ever found in God happiness in the darkest lot and peace in the direst affliction. Mother Antonia cried aloud to Him and not in vain. In the crisis of her trial, she found that those who were with her were mightier than those who were against her, as the sequel will show.

True to what he considered his duty as the faithful

helper of Bishop Henni, the Vicar General commissioned Father Flasch to go to St. Coletta Convent as chaplain and depose Father Obermueller. How did the Very Reverend Kundig thus chance upon the right man for that mission? Wonderful, once again in this instance, as in a thousand others, is seen the Hand of our Lord God!

Father Flasch set out from St. Francis for Jefferson with a feeling slightly suggestive of the ardor that swayed St. Paul when he started out from Jerusalem for Damascus. Arriving at St. Coletta Convent, he immediately summoned Mother Antonia and reprimanded her earnestly. He reproached her for her audacious willfulness, her sad want of propriety and dependency on ecclesiastical authority. What worse could he say? Still, his stern language was that of a friend and bore no sting. Mother Antonia listened silently until he began to admonish her to bethink herself of a wiser manner of acting, when she said: "If your Reverence is willing to observe silence concerning this affair, you may easily convince yourself how unjust are the accusations with which they are well-nigh crucifying me," and she handed him Bishop Heiss' letters. He read them with intense surprise and then deeply affected said: "Well, who would have dreamt that you hold anything like this in your hands? I will, indeed, keep silence. But while I will act as your Spiritual Director, Father Obermueller must continue to fulfill his duties as actual chaplain until Bishop Heiss returns." And thus, despite the order of Father Kundig, no change was made.

Mother Antonia became ill under the awful strain and suspense. In her extreme prostration, with streaming tears, she prayed thus at the foot of the crucifix: "Dearest Lord, to Your Mother You gave St. John as

a support, to St. Teresa, St. Peter of Alcantara; if it be Your holy will that our community prosper and be permanently established, You must send me help — either an angel or Bishop Heiss!" Even while she thus pleaded with the Lord, not an angel, but Bishop Heiss was on his way to Jefferson and arrived that very day.

He had returned to La Crosse on Christmas Eve, and, although pressed for time and overburdened with delayed official business, he repaired at once to St. Coletta Convent in evident answer to Mother Antonia's beseeching appeal to heaven. He assured her that he would personally attend to the necessary explanations to be made to Bishop Henni, to the Vicar General, and to the Seminary faculty. The clouds now lifted and the shadows fled. The mortal dread of the difficulties and of the blighting accusations against the good Mother now gave way to a feeling of security and to a happy vision of the great joy that the new convent, now in the course of erection, would ultimately give to the great apostolic heart of the good bishop. With filial devotedness, the Sisters knelt about their Spiritual Father to kiss his ring and to receive his blessing. He had much that was interesting to tell them, and he told it all in such a charming way that even the least detail was fixed in their memories.

Quietly as the dawn brightens into morn, did St. Coletta Convent yield to St. Rose. On July 10, 1871, a Sister and four Postulants left for La Crosse. Two days later Father Obermueller, and Mother Antonia with another group of Sisters and Postulants followed. Thus did St. Rose de Viterbo Convent become the Motherhouse, and St. Coletta was henceforth but a mission.

But if St. Coletta Convent with its fertile acres of farm land surrounded by a populace of thrifty farmers

was poverty-stricken in the days of its beginning, what shall we say of St. Rose de Viterbo on the barren, lonely prairie? A joiner's bench served as table; the floor, as couch; and a meager ration of coarse bread and coffee, as sustenance at meals. A feeling of loneliness crept over the Sisters as they contemplated their bare, mortar-strewn, and lime-bespattered new house. Happily they possessed a liberal supply of hope, patience, and courage; and as for Mother Antonia, though her purse was empty and the city and the diocese were poor, she knew that she had at her disposal willing hearts and hands; and her own trust in God was as unwavering as is the eagle's eye upon the sun. How could she fear, therefore, for the existence and future of the new Motherhouse?

St. Rose de Viterbo Convent was soon a veritable bee-hive. Let fancy portray the ever shifting scenes of scrubbing, scouring, painting, and sweeping. Soon the mission Sisters came home not to rest but to lighten the labors. Whoever coveted the comfort of a cell had to clean one. The inconvenience of sitting on the floor at meals for want of a chair was met with the cheery response: "What fun!" An inspiring word here and a witty remark there turned the hard work into real pastime. But the task, trying beyond all telling, was unquestionably that of clearing the yard of sand burs — that, too, beneath the scorching rays of the summer sun.

While the Sisters were thus whole-heartedly employed, Mother Antonia was no less active in her zealous efforts to fit out the largest and best room on the first floor — our present double parlor — as a provisional chapel. Notwithstanding the poverty of the community, she contrived to purchase a handsome carpet for the sanctuary and two beautiful good-sized pictures,

one of the Ascension and the other of the Assumption. A fine oil painting of the Madonna and Child, Father Obermueller's contribution, helped to complete an inspiring little side shrine. The three pictures had a charming and a telling attraction for the young aspirants of that summer. They still grace the walls of St. Rose Convent as cherished souvenirs of the first Reception and Profession within its hallowed precincts.

As happy, perhaps, as the Seraphic St. Francis and his companions in the cave before the first Christmas Crib, were the Sisters in their humble little chapel so aptly furnished and adorned in due time for the keeping of our Lady's beautiful Feast of the Assumption, which was set apart as the day of days especially for the novices and postulants of 1871. Even happier than the Sisters was Bishop Heiss over this final realization of his most eager desire of having the Motherhouse in La Crosse. He conducted a three days' retreat in person, after which he invested the postulants, a class of five, and received the vows of the novices, eleven in number, eight of the original band having already pronounced their vows at St. Francis some time previous. The new formula of profession given Bishop Heiss by the Superior General of the Minor Conventuals was used for the first time on this occasion. Still another event helped to make this first convent solemnity at St. Rose memorable. The Sisters had hitherto made or renewed vows for intervals of only one or three years, whereas to-day they were privileged to renew them for seven years, at the end of which time they hoped to plight themselves by perpetual vows to God.

Thus the whole community participated in the heavenly favors with which Providence was pleased to mark the day on which the new Motherhouse began

its blessed career. No visitors had been invited for the occasion, and the Sisters dwelt for a few happy days in union with the Lord on Tabor. They adored in faith, exulted in love, and enjoyed in humility the abounding goodness of God and the ineffable benediction of His Sacramental Presence. But Obedience soon bade them, as did the Savior His disciples on Tabor, return to life's stern realities. Vacation drew to its close, and the teachers departed to their respective schools which numbered twenty at the beginning of September, 1871. These schools were located in the states of Wisconsin, Iowa, and Ohio.

After the departure of the mission Sisters, those remaining at home were kept busy putting things in order and keeping the house clean. There were no modern labor-saving devices, yet everything was kept spotlessly clean. Fortunately, the greater part of the house was left unoccupied for the purpose of saving fuel. The kitchen became all in all to them. Here they cooked, ate, sewed, embroidered, studied, painted, and prepared their music and school lessons. Picture Sister Luca Bird, in a corner of the kitchen, assiduously plying her brush and paints for the glory of God and our Blessed Mother. The dear Sister possessed masterful talent, but scarcely had she begun to exercise it when she was summoned, July 5, 1872, to the heavenly studio to study the divinest of Models.

Closely elbowing the artist's easel, stood the embroidery frames at which deft fingers executed rich designs on various Church vestments and other articles, all of which gave promise of the proficiency since developed in this department. Across from the easel and needle-work frames, with a long table between, stood a very old Chickering piano. Here nearly always, some

one of the amateur musicians, under the tutelage of Sister Bonaventure, was fingering away, calling forth discord quite as often as harmony. But all were persevering in their endeavors to become virtuosos in the shortest possible space of time. There was also practice on the violin and other stringed instruments, and the breaking of a string was almost a tragedy; for such an article was about the last thing one could expect to procure in those days of poverty.

The first school room adjoined the kitchen from which it was supposed to be heated by keeping the door ajar. But the warmth thus obtained was very slight; and icy cold slates, stiff and frost-bitten fingers, and chilblained feet suggest some of the hardships under which these first Sister students at St. Rose labored. Nevertheless, under the direction of their kind and gentle teacher, Sister Xavier Keller, they cheerfully applied themselves to their studies, eager to prepare for the Master's call, "Go you also into My vineyard."

Thus the first winter at La Crosse sped away on the wing, and the summer of 1872 brought the usual vacation reunion, numerous applications for teachers, the reception of seven postulants into the novitiate, the laying of the corner stone of a new chapel by Father Obermueller, and a slight change in the religious dress of the Sisters. The scapular hitherto worn was now discarded. This necessitated other modifications, the outcome of which was the plaited habit of the present day. The white veil of the Novices was exchanged for the black, and each Professed Sister was henceforth distinguished by the wearing of a ring.

Finally, when the October sun of 1872 dyed the bluffs in glory, the youthful Sister Vincentia McCann went forth unto the Lord, the first fruit of St. Rose de

Viterbo. Her remains were temporarily interred in the southeast corner of the Convent block until after the completion of the new chapel when they were removed to a burial plot back of this, a spot for many years affectionately called by the Sisters "God's Acre."

> "I like that ancient Saxon phrase, which calls
> The burial-ground 'God's Acre.' It is just;
> This is the field and acre of our God;
> This is the place where human harvest grows!"

Is our narrative becoming monotonous? No; but, perhaps, somewhat methodical, which suggests, we trust, the happy reality that religious discipline and a most satisfactory daily routine had been established in the new Motherhouse. The schools were numerous and progressive and our field of usefulness was ever widening. Apparently, the community at length seemed destined to progress and endure; but alas! all these hopeful signs were but a promise of solid joys deferred.

CHAPTER XIV

ANOTHER GREAT TRIAL AND ITS OUTCOME

How often on the busy thoroughfare of life we pause before a conflict of two great interests, each of which has a moral right according to the individual view point. Such a conflict of interests was for a long time pending between the Seminary at St. Francis and the Community of Franciscan Sisters entrusted with the household care of the former; and our narrative has frequently intimated this fact, although all concerned, particularly Dr. Salzmann, sincerely wished that a friendly understanding should continue to exist between the two institutions.

A pathetic scene of the time will convince us of Dr. Salzmann's sincerity of purpose in this regard. Picture the great professor just returned from Europe. One of his first errands is to Jefferson. He goes directly to the baggage room at the station and singles out a wooden box. The removal of the cover is but the work of a few moments. Layers of packing are removed, and we behold — a beautiful statue of the Blessed Virgin. With a hopeful gleam of pious joy in his features, the good Dr. Salzmann personally bears the statue to St. Coletta Convent, and with tears in his eyes, presents it to Mother Antonia, saying: "St. Francis of Sales and St. Francis of Assisi were famed for their devotion to the Mother of God. "Let us too," continued he, with a deep sigh, "unite St. Francis Seminary and St. Coletta Convent by the same ties of

friendship under the protecting care of the Queen of Heaven."

But friendship's ties must present no obstacle to heaven's decrees, and Providence, no doubt, willed that these two institutions should pursue their heavenward journey by distinctly separate paths. It will be remembered that the six original founders had withdrawn from the community because the work at the Seminary had frustrated their hopes not only of establishing the Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament but also the attainment of their most cherished ideals of religious life. Though absent in body, the spirit of the founders still seemed to linger, and Mother Ameliana's desire for a more contemplative life through the establishment of the Perpetual Adoration had been bequeathed to Mother Antonia, even as the mantle of Elias had descended upon Eliseus.

The work of the Sisters at the Seminary has been explained in previous chapters. The very life of the Seminary depended upon their arduous, unceasing labor; therefore, prayer and recollection, essential elements of a religious life, became, under these conditions, of secondary importance. Like Mother Ameliana, Mother Antonia felt this inconsistency keenly; time and again she sighed deeply over the spiritual needs of her dear daughters, and longed for the dawn of a brighter day when she could behold her spiritual children gathered together before their Sacramental Lord, and feeding their souls with words of wisdom from His Divine lips. And Providence willed that she should see this brighter day, but many a long, dark night was to precede its dawn.

Possibly at the very moment that Doctor Salzmann was presenting the statue of our Heavenly Queen, and

hoping for an ever-enduring harmony between the Salesianum and St. Coletta Convent, Mother Antonia's keen eye pierced the veil which screened the future, and faintly discerned at least the first indications of an impending tempest. Even as the skilled meteorologist looking into the clear blue heaven knows, days in advance, that a terrific storm is brewing, so, though to the Sisters in general all seemed well, Mother Antonia knew that sooner or later there must come a clash between the interests of the Seminary and those of the Convent. In the words of that renowned poet, the gentle Father Faber, whose name makes sweetest memories in Catholic hearts:

"There came a cloud o'er this bright home,
Sudden and strange; and few of them knew
From whence the omen dark had come
When all the sky around was blue,
The wind dropped down and sounds came near
Like thunder when the air is clear."

But without the clouds in this happy retrospect, without the minor chords in these harmonious strains, our story would become tedious, since even continuous sunshine becomes monotonous, and the glistening raindrop on the opening bud after the storm has passed, inspires new delight, makes us grateful for the tempest, and teaches us to turn again with deeper appreciation to the sunshine and calm.

"The wind disturbs the sleeping lake
And bids it ripple fresh and free;
It rocks the green boughs in their mesh
Making the sweetest melody."

And in the order of grace, spiritual tempests are no less significant in the Divine plan; for, if in the natural order

"The deeper the darkness,
The brighter the morn,"

so, too, may we say in the supernatural order

"The soul's greatest gladness
Of sorrow is born."

Mother Antonia was noted for her strong disciplinary measures, and, while St. Coletta remained the Motherhouse, she exercised strict personal supervision over the Sisters and their work at the Salesianum. But she was no longer able to do so after the transfer of the Motherhouse to La Crosse; and, as a consequence, minor infractions of the regulations she had established crept in. Against these she strongly protested, and furthermore insisted also that the Sisters be released from certain manual labor with which they had been burdened by the Seminary. Her insistence, however, was to no purpose save to disaffect some of the Sisters and practically all of the professors toward her, since those in charge of the household duties of the Seminary were naturally, in spite of the hardships connected therewith, loyally devoted to the cause, which was certainly a worthy one. For, whatever may be said of the obstacles to a strictly conventual life this work presented at that time, — to assist the "Anointed of the Lord," to be, as it were, a Martha to Christ in the person of his priests and the aspirants to the priesthood by ministering to their temporal needs, is not given to every woman; and though Mary chose "the better part," contemplation, surely we are all glad that the

good Martha ministered to our dear Lord's physical comforts.

When Mother Antonia finally decided to withdraw at least part of the Sisters from the Salesianum, it was but natural, therefore, that a spirit of unrest would manifest itself among the Sisters, and a spirit of opposition rise on the part of the faculty. Confusion reigned for a time and many a conscience was sorely disturbed. Loyal to God and her community, loving the Seminary, called upon to make a choice not between good and evil, but between two equally noble causes which were destined henceforth to achieve their aim by pursuing distinctly separate paths, each Sister at the Seminary was confronted by the one persistent, all absorbing question: "What shall I do?" One there was who threw herself at the foot of the altar, uttering aloud the prayer that others were silently pouring forth from grief-stricken hearts: "O Jesus, grant that there may be no separation!" Others sought advice from priests of the faculty, who, loyal to their own cause, earnestly advised the Sisters to remain at the Seminary; others settled the question for themselves, reasoning thus: "Surely, the superiors know what we should do. I will follow their guidance."

For some time, matters hung thus in the balance, but the prayers and tears of the Sisters doubtless moved the Good Shepherd to hasten to the aid of his sorely tried lambs. The whole question was referred to Right Reverend Martin Henni, Bishop of Milwaukee, to whom ecclesiastical jurisdiction in the matter rightly belonged. His Lordship, appreciating the true significance of the delicate situation and the anxiety it must create in the Sisters' minds concerning their

actual obligations, declared that they were free to decide without prejudice to their vows either in favor of the Seminary or of St. Rose Convent in La Crosse. Doctor Salzmann, who passed to his eternal reward the following year, Jan. 17, 1874, assembled the Sisters in conference, and delivered to them the bishop's decision. Pillar of the Seminary that he was, he pleaded for loyalty to that institution with an earnestness in keeping with his devotion to the same.

Just previous to this, Mother Antonia, after conferring with Bishop Heiss, called Sister Bridget from St. Francis to St. Rose Convent, La Crosse. The good Sister responded promptly to the call, and was directed to return to St. Francis with a message from Mother Antonia to the Sisters in the Seminary. The message was probably based upon Bishop Henni's decision as just given. At all events, it coincided with it, stating that as far as their vows were concerned the Sisters were absolutely free to remain at work in the Seminary or, to come to the Motherhouse at La Crosse. Those, however, who decided in favor of the latter, were to repair at once to St. Coletta Convent, Jefferson. These two events, Mother Antonia's message and Doctor Salzmann's conference, enabled the grief-stricken Sisters to take a rational view of a sorely-perplexing situation and to make a conscientious decision. Sister Rose Francois, who held the office of Assistant at the time, and consequently had general supervision of matters affecting the Sisters in the Seminary, Orphan Home, and St. Coletta Convent, conferred with Sister Mechtild, the superior at the Seminary, concerning the departure to St. Coletta Convent, Jefferson, of those Sisters who so desired. With heavy

hearts, Sister Rose, Sister Mechtild, and a little band of devoted followers bade farewell to thirty-six of their cherished companions who had chosen to remain in the Seminary, and who, deprived of a superior by the departure of Sister Mechtild, elected to that office Sister Crescentia.

The joys and sorrows of ordinary friendship are too deep, too sacred to be spelled in words. How much deeper and stronger, therefore, must be those arising from holier ties, cemented by the religious bond, and designated by the sweet name of "sister." Far from us the presumption, therefore, of venturing to portray or even to intimate the sentiments of the Sisters at this "parting of the ways." Though they knew that "their roads must meet by and by," that their separate paths must again converge as they neared the final goal of all life's struggling, this separation sent a quiver of grief through the entire Sisterhood.

"They are so sad to say: no poem tells
The agony of hearts that dwells
In lone and last farewells.

"They are like deaths: they bring a wintry chill
To summer's roses, and to summer's rill;
And yet we breathe them still.

"For pure as altar-lights, hearts pass away;
Hearts! we said to them, 'Stay with us! stay!'
And they said, sighing as they said it, 'Nay.'"

And here the curtain drops upon this truly sad scene in the history of our community. Dark clouds have completely enveloped the Sisterhood. Let us watch for their breaking, in order not to miss the rainbow of

hope which quickly follows, as well as the unfolding of the "silver lining." In the meantime, we shall remember that

> "God knows all things — but we
> In darkness walk our ways;
> We wonder what will be
> Throughout the coming days.
> He holds the tangled threads,
> His hand unravels them;
> He knows the hearts and heads
> For thorns — then diadem."

That the Divine Weaver has produced admirable designs out of the apparently tangled threads in the skein of events just described, illustrating well His infinite wisdom and goodness in behalf of our community, the following pages of this narrative will plainly show. In fact, it scarcely requires an unusual vision of hope, much less a prophetic eye, to catch the "silver linings" as our story proceeds. Yet, as Lowell says, "We see dimly in the present what is small and what is great," should the reader fail to do so,

> Till the broken clouds
> Have sailed off in crowds
> Revealing a sea of glory,

his admiration will be the greater, and all the keener will be his appreciation of our intentional neglect to point out, in the meantime, the many slight rifts in the laden sky. On the other hand, since we shall not have occasion henceforth to refer to the progress of the Sisterhood at St. Francis, out of tender deference to sacred memories of the past, we add, in passing, that in addition to its labors in the interest of the Seminary,

its later achievements are strong testimonies of heaven's attendant blessing.

And now a word as to the disposition of St. Coletta Convent, our first Motherhouse at Jefferson. The following paragraph taken from a letter, dated Jan. 17, 1877, and addressed by Right Reverend Bishop Heiss to Father Wapelhorst, the Reverend Rector of this Seminary, will help to explain:

Esteemed Friend:—

I am in receipt of your letter and fully approve your plan. The Sisters here are willing to sell the Convent and farm in Jefferson for $6,000,—$4,000 in cash, and to accept a mortgage at 5% for three, four, or five years, as may suit the convenience of the Sisters there, for the remaining $2,000. Your Reverence will understand that the sum we ask, does not cover one-half the value of the property, but our Sisters make this sacrifice willingly in order that the Convent at Jefferson may pass into the possession of the Sisters of the Seminary. Our Sisters would like to withdraw from Jefferson as soon as possible. If your Reverence can do so, kindly send two Sisters at once to take charge of the school on the hill. I think if you can send three Sisters, two for the school and one for the house during the course of this week or at the beginning of the next, the transfer of the Convent can be made even during the same week without difficulty. I would add that if the Sisters there would be ready to take over the school at Watertown, a good place in our estimation, our Sisters would relinquish it in their favor. * * *

Father Wapelhorst's prompt and amicable reply elicited from Bishop Heiss the following:

La Crosse, Wis., Jan. 20, 1877.

Very Rev. Chas. Wapelhorst,
Rector of the Salesianum,
Esteemed Friend:

Your letter of the 18th inst., received this morning, gave much joy to myself and the Sisters. I think this agreement settles everything. We much prefer having the Jefferson Convent and property pass into the hands of the Sisters at the Seminary for

$6,000 than to have it go into the possession of some other community for $12,000; and I feel that I can assure your Reverence that our Sisters here will ever gladly render the Sisters of the Seminary any service in their power.

Rev. Father Obermueller and Mr. Leinfelder will arrive in Jefferson next Tuesday, the 23rd, to do the packing. If the Sister teachers and any of the other Sisters could arrive there at the same time, everything could be adjusted. Regarding the remittance of the $4,000, the time for this may be extended to the middle of February. Upon payment of this sum, the deed will be drawn up, and the Sisters of the Seminary will give a mortgage note for $2,000 at 5% for three, four, or five years. As many Sisters as you may wish to send will be welcome at Jefferson next Tuesday, and they will be received in sisterly charity by all our Sisters who are still there.

The packing will require two or three days; and not all the Sisters can leave at the same time because they have not the required number of half-fare permits. It may therefore be as late as Saturday before all of our Sisters can leave; but this should be no reason why the Sisters of the Seminary could not be there at the same time. If I have understood Your Reverence correctly, the Jefferson Convent is to become the Motherhouse for the Sisters of the Seminary. This fact will impress the congregation most favorably; and I think these good people will continue to render the Sisters stationed there the same kindly assistance which has been given our Sisters all these years. When we transferred the Motherhouse to La Crosse, I had intended to put St. Coletta Convent to some definite purpose; viz., the training of postulants — make a novitiate of it possibly — but, with Father Obermueller at St. Rose, I did not have a priest for this purpose, hence, I had to change my plans. Father Obermueller's departure from Jefferson was felt most keenly by the good people there since it deprived them of a resident priest. Indeed, it served to some extent to estrange them from the Sisters. How great, therefore, will be their joy now that St. Coletta is again to become a Motherhouse and will insure them the services of a resident pastor! If you can get a priest like Rev. Father Obermueller or Rev. Father Birkhaeuser, all will be exceedingly well. * * *

Kindly greetings to all the Sisters at the Seminary from the Sisters here and also from me, and tell them that the past is

hereby settled — dead and buried. Please extend my thanks and those of the Sisters here to His Grace for his approval of the transaction. Greetings to Rev. K. Flasch and the other Reverend Professors. Most respectfully,

Your devoted friend,

MICHAEL HEISS, Ep. Cr.

This settlement marks definitely the "parting of the ways;" and these pages will henceforth be exclusively concerned with the History of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis of the Perpetual Adoration and of their Motherhouse, St. Rose de Viterbo Convent, called briefly "St. Rose."

There now remained in this community a total of eighty-seven members: sixty-three Professed Sisters, fourteen Novices, and ten Postulants.

Let us borrow from "The Voice of the Sacred Heart" a fitting conclusion for this chapter:

"Men tell us of the coral tree beneath the mighty tide
Whose branches there all interlaced, above the waves divide;
So Christian hearts are interlaced, whose paths lie far apart,
Beneath the sea, all fathomless, of Jesus' Sacred Heart.

"All meet in Jesus' Sacred Heart whom charity hath bound,
The self-same interest, their hearts, its chain hath flung around;
There's not a one, where 'er her path, but seeks one fireside —
One home, one final rendezvous in Jesus' open side,

Where countless hearts, united throb with that same ardent love
Which animates the glorified in Jesus' Heart above;
Oh! glorious prerogative of Jesus' spouses, friends!
Oh! fire of love which every heart in one great furnace blends."

CHAPTER XV

THE FIRST CHAPEL OF MARIA ANGELORUM. CARE OF THE ORPHANS

Mother Antonia's hopes centered ever on the erection of a fitting place for our Eucharistic King. He was ever the Divine Magnet that held her heart captive. We have seen in previous chapters that her life's great aim was the establishment of the Perpetual Adoration; but before she could make any telling effort in that direction, many other important matters claimed her attention. St. Rose de Viterbo was still in its infancy,—it had not even a chapel proper. What then served as temporary chapel is now* our double parlor, which for a number of our Sisters is a hallowed spot, since, during three successive years, 1871-1874, it was sanctified daily by the celebration of the Divine Mysteries. Hither came on two particularly solemn occasions, two distinct groups of maidens, in the morning of their lives, in the fervor of their first love, to pledge their allegiance to the Immortal King, saying with St. Peter in the fulness of their young hearts, "Behold! we have left all things to follow Thee." Here for the first time in the history of St. Rose de Viterbo on the Feast of the Assumption, 1871, a joyful band responded to the Divine Bridegroom's invitation, "Veni, Sponsa Mea," five to receive the veil, and eleven to pronounce the sacred vows of religion.

Now, however, 1873, the thoughts of all at St. Rose Convent, both young and old, turn lovingly towards

*(The reader is kindly asked to bear in mind that this volume was written in 1920, hence, whenever the present is referred to the year 1920 is meant.)

the completion of a fitting throne for their Spouse and King, the corner stone of a chapel having been laid the previous year. While the sacrifices of the older members had multiplied incredibly to make this chapel at all possible, the younger members were in a state of loving impatience, especially those of the class which had been preparing for Investiture and Profession since 1872. And now they were told that Right Reverend Bishop Heiss had said that these ceremonies would not be held this year, 1873, if the chapel were not finished. The desires of youth are ardent; its glances, all forward, it has no past. We can imagine, therefore, with what intense longing those enthusiastic young hearts looked forward to the completion of that chapel. Not content with calling upon Heaven to hasten the good work, the novices, eager to consummate their sacrifice by the taking of the vows, and the postulants desirous to manifest outwardly by the reception of the religious habit that they found Him whom their souls loved, adopted a unique course of action.

The last echo of the knell of 1872 had long since ceased to resound from hill and vale; spring was dotting the hillside with patches of velvety-green; but the new chapel seemed not to understand nature's call. To the minds of these ardent young souls, it would never be finished unless they took an active part in the work. Accordingly, one bright morning shortly after the Easter of 1873, Mr. Leinfelder, the architect, found himself in the midst of a band of workers unique in the history of architecture. He might have dismissed them with a knowing smile, or by simply emphasizing another word in General Washington's famous query: "What can *you* do?" But plainly written on the face of each was the gallant Kosciusko's laconic reply, "Try me!" Besides, Mother Antonia was their spokesman,

and this is possibly what Mr. Leinfelder heard: "These children fear they will have to wait another year for their investiture unless you get some help; besides, they can probably learn to lath, if not so rapidly yet equally as well as a carpenter, and their number will compensate for their lack of speed." Saying which, Mother Antonia took up lath, hammer, and nails, and, under her brother's direction, led the way for a scene truly worthy of an artist's brush. Surely, St. Joseph, the lowly carpenter of Nazareth, and Jesus Who so often lovingly assisted him smiled upon this band of virgins whose courage, equal to their love, had prompted this undertaking.

No doubt, the architect was exceedingly busy for the next hour or so assigning to each her portion of work, and showing her how to execute it. Possibly, too, there were a number of bruised fingers at the end of the first day; but we may safely assume that at its close, all had learned one lesson in carpentry — to miss their fingers and hit the nail — and whatever mishaps they may have had from day to day, as the work progressed, it is interesting to know that they actually did all the lathing, not excepting that of the arches and ceiling of the first chapel of St. Rose Convent. Later on, when the frescoing was in progress, these same workers did the gilding. And, dear reader, that you may not under-estimate the amount of their work, we give here a brief description of the structure. Including the transept, it was forty feet in breadth, sixty feet long, and thirty-five feet high. The style was Romanesque.

For the benefit of the younger members of the community who have never seen this chapel, it is a pleasure to be able to state that the present chapel of St. Mary's Hospital, Sparta, Wis., resembles our first "Maria

Angelorum" in size and architecture; and that the altar, the sanctuary lamp, and all the windows of the original chapel have been placed therein.

At first, various names were suggested. Right Reverend Bishop Heiss thought it should be named "St. Rose" in honor of the patron of the Convent; Father Obermueller considered "St. Francis" a more fitting title; Mother Antonia was undecided. She mentioned the matter to Sister Bonaventure who, versed in Franciscan lore, promptly suggested: "Mary of the Angels," the title St. Francis had given to his first church, the cradle of the Franciscan Order. Mother Antonia lost no time in communicating this suggestion to the Right Reverend Bishop. To him and Father Obermueller, also, it seemed a happy inspiration.

And those of us who have had the privilege of spending many a sacred hour in that dear chapel, do we not agree that no more fitting title could have been given? Within its hallowed walls, nearly four hundred of the members of our community have vowed their fealty to the Immortal King. Who of this number, think you, does not possess in memory's cherished art room a view of the window above the high altar, representing our beloved Queen of the Angels, resplendent in the light and beauty of the morning sun, reminding them that as of old she gave her Jesus to the simple shepherds and Wise Men, so now she brought Him anew each day at the solemn moment of the Consecration, since without Mary's wondrous "fiat" there would never be a holy Mass, a Consecration? And, as if to foster and perpetuate these blessed memories, the window referred to has been photographed and from the photos has resulted the engraving of our Queen on the reverse of the medal of the Blessed Sacra-

ment worn by each Sister who has made perpetual vows.

But fancy, on its fleet wings, has borne us far in advance of the event so ardently desired by the band of zealous workers. In the meantime, it was quite evident that the work of these amateurs was rapidly hastening the completion of the chapel. The lathing was finished, and then — to the intense disappointment of these youthful hearts — for lack of funds, all work on the chapel was suspended. What could these tried souls now do? Sit down and weep? Not they. Willingly they went out and earned funds; for those were heroic days, those first days of our community at St. Rose, La Crosse, even as they had been at St. Coletta, Jefferson. With little ceremony, therefore, and possibly with less explanation the various members were sent forth wherever there was a call for service. The vineyard allotted to each individual is not precisely known at this period; but it is interesting to know the whereabouts of at least a few of them. The following postulants: Catherine Kraus, Johanna Aman, Barbara Antoni, and Barbara Weissman, known to us in this year of grace, 1920, respectively as — Sister Seraphine, our present beloved Mother Assistant; Sister Frances, of blessed memory; Sister Gertrude, Sister Teresa, were assigned, in the order above named, to the well-known missions of St. Mary's Ridge, St. Joseph's Ridge, St. Joseph's in La Crosse, and Baden, Iowa. The last-named mission is now known as Harper, the Church and school at Baden having been moved later on to Harper.

"Backward! turn backward, O Time, in your flight," silvered age sadly entreats. "Onward! roll onward," demands impetuous youth. But Time, heeding neither the one nor the other, with steady, measured step pur-

FIRST CHAPEL OF MARIA ANGELORUM,
Consecrated July 2, 1874

sues his onward course passing for the disappointed members of our Class of 1873, as for others, milestone after milestone in his journey, and finally, to their intense delight, the year has rolled away, and the day so long desired dawns.

On the Feast of the Visitation, July 2, 1874, Maria Angelorum presented a most memorable scene. Seventeen priests, chiefly from the missions where the Sisters labored, had assembled for a solemn rite — that of consecrating an earthly temple to the living God. But of all who participated in the ceremonies of that great day, one stands out most prominently in the minds of those who are privileged to recall the scene. It is the imposing figure of the consecrator, the founder of the community, Right Reverend Bishop Heiss. Of the priests who carried the relics in the solemn procession, Rev. Clement Johannes, Rev. Conrad Schulte, Rev. Gerhard Luehrsmann, and Rev. Wm. Jacoby, the last-named alone survives, 1920. The consecrator — who later on succeeded to the archiepiscopal See of Milwaukee — was called to his reward in 1890; the deacon, Rev. Paul Geyer, in 1899; the sub-deacon, our present beloved Bishop Schwebach, and Rev. Wm. Jacoby are, therefore, the sole survivors of those who took a special part in the ceremonies of that joyful day. Singenberger's Mass in D was ably rendered by the choir, and our present Mother M. Richard of St. Francis Hospital presided at the organ.

Words fail to describe the joy and gratitude which welled up in the hearts of the Sisters during the Mass and Benediction; and, when, during the solemn Te Deum, which closed the ceremonies of that blessed day, the Bishop's soul-stirring tenor rose above the voices of the assembled clergy, it seemed as if the angels had taken up the glad refrain and mingled their voices with

this visible choir to praise the Triune God in the chapel of their Queen. Like St. Aloysius who had to be commanded by his superiors to limit his time before the Blessed Sacrament to a reasonable period, the Sisters were loath to leave the sacred place, and, as for Mother Antonia, she always called this chapel the "Lord's Residence." Yet her joy was not to be complete until she could see the Divine Prisoner of the Tabernacle exposed and honored both day and night.

The second great solemnity in the chapel of Maria Angelorum took place on July 14. On this occasion, the Seventh Centenary of the death of the Seraphic Doctor St. Bonaventure was celebrated with less splendor, perhaps, but no less ardor than the celebration of July 2 had been.

And now, Aug. 12, 1874, for the third time, something extraordinary is about to take place in our new chapel. Do you, dear reader, need an introduction to the happy band there assembled? Ah! no. You surely recognize at least a number of these young maidens as the novices and postulants who figured in the scene at the opening of this chapter, and who so materially aided in the completion of Maria Angelorum. How abundantly rewarded they feel to-day for the strenuous efforts they put forth in this laudable enterprise — and the strain had been severe. Day after day, they had risen long before the sun's first rays had tinged the hill-tops, and had worked several hours before breakfast, which consisted of nothing more substantial than a piece of dry bread and a cup of coffee; and frequently, long after the setting sun had gilded the west, the clinking of their hammers furnished the music for their evening recreation. Rewarded! on this long-desired day, by Him who will not be outdone in generosity; for, on eighteen of those heads that have often ached

under the strain of work not intended for woman, there will be placed to-day the coveted veil, and the nuptial ring — symbol of espousal with the Eternal King — will encircle the finger of each of the thirteen novices.

At this time, 1874, a number of the Sisters were still in Jefferson. As yet, La Crosse possessed no orphan home, though a sum of money had been bequeathed to the Right Reverend Bishop Heiss for the founding of such an institution. The executor of the benefactor's last will refused, however, to transfer the legacy until the Sisters presented an orphan child actually under their care. Providential, it cannot but seem, that some time previous to this the bereaved father of a little motherless girl had begged Mother Antonia to undertake the difficult task of rearing the infant. The community at that time had an institution for the care of boys at St. Francis, Wisconsin, but none for girls; besides, the child was but two weeks old, so, only after continued entreaties on the part of the afflicted father, did Mother Antonia consent to accept this charge. When the little girl was in her third year, she was brought to La Crosse. Hence, when the lawyer demanded proof that the community was actually caring for orphans, Sister Innocentia Wrocklage, later so well known in the community as Mother Innocentia, presented the little girl as evidence that the terms of the will were complied with, and the Bishop forthwith received the bequest.

Late in 1875, St. Michael's Orphan Home was completed, and Sister Rose Francois was placed at the head of the institution which at first cared for both boys and girls. Later on the girls were transferred to Sparta until what is now known as St. Ann's in connection with St. Francis Hospital was erected for them in 1889.

St. Ann's has been the scene of many an orphan girl's

sweetest memories. In later years, however, it had grown too small for the ever-increasing number of girls who sought admittance. In 1911, the new St. Michael's Home was erected just outside the city limits; and the boys and girls were transferred to this new home which was solemnly dedicated on the twelfth of October.

In selecting a site for the institution, various needs were kept in view by the representatives of the Diocese. Spacious playgrounds were laid out and equipped with the design of satisfying that God-given spirit of play to be found in every normal child. And, as joy loves company even more so than does misery, these lambkins of the Savior's vast fold enjoy themselves to their hearts' content. In later years they will lovingly revert to this Eden of their childhood — an Eden not lost, since its blessed memories will accompany them through life. There will also be a disposition to meet cheerfully the stern realities of life because of the joy waiting beyond. Yes, St. Michael's is, indeed, an ideal home for children. Its location is enhanced by nature's sweetest charms. It is like a diamond in its setting. With the bluffs above their heads inviting them to "a climb," a broad, clear channel of the Mississippi luring them to its bosom, and the wood beckoning them to explore its haunts, these happy children may daily

"Go forth under the open sky and list to Nature's teachings."

And their souls having been tuned to her exquisite harmonies, will join nature in her never-ending hymn of praise to the Creator. Here we leave them, therefore, to enjoy the loveliness of Mother Nature while we return to busy ourselves, in the following chapter, with scenes of a more remote past.

CHAPTER XVI

THE PERPETUAL ADORATION ESTABLISHED AT ST. ROSE

In 1875, Mother Antonia was re-elected as Mother General for a fifth term, and our present Mother General, M. Ludovica, was then chosen for the first time as Assistant.

Though a number of new missions were opened in Iowa during the years 1875-1877 and requests for Sisters to take charge of schools were so numerous that all could not be granted, Mother Antonia did not lose sight of the establishment of the Perpetual Adoration. "Whether the skies were blue or gray," this thought seems to have been ever before her: The promise made in the dark days at Jefferson was not to be forgotten as the clouds rolled away and an era of prosperity seemed to be dawning. Then, as now, all religious souls acknowledged that " strength in the valley proceeded from prayer on the mount;" yet, Perpetual Adoration was not considered possible at that time even by prelates remarkable for piety and distinguished by devotion to the Most Holy Sacrament. The crying need of the country in those days was for Catholic churches, Catholic missionaries, and Catholic schools. There were, indeed, few, if any, communities at that time in which the Perpetual Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament was observed. No wonder that Archbishop Heiss did not favor the proposition.

Time and again had Mother Antonia begged His Lordship to grant this great favor, but he, for reasons

that seemed to him most convincing, wisely hesitated. The financial standing of the community, he said, would not as yet warrant it; it would be too hard on the Sisters, since their number was comparatively small; in short, his objections seemed to him so evident that he chided Mother General for her insistence, and finally she concluded to bide the Lord's own time. She was firmly convinced of the truth of the proverb: "All good things come to those who wait." Though this object was exceedingly dear to her heart she resolved to live to the letter the injunction:

"Haste not! fret not! calmly wait;
Meekly bear the storms of fate!
Haste not! fret not; conflicts past,
God shall crown thy work at last."

Yes, Mother Antonia waited; but her prayers and those of the little community grew, meanwhile, in fervor and presistence. They must have re-echoed deeper and ever deeper in the Eucharistic Heart of Jesus, until, finally, He Who prefers to suspend nature's laws than suffer to go unheeded a trustful prayer, suddenly moved the heart of the Bishop to consider Mother Antonia's oft-repeated request a clear manifestation of the Divine will.

In the year 1878, when winter was probably still disputing with spring her right to reign, an incident occurred which spelled immediate preparation for the accomplishment of the community's long-cherished desire. On an intensely cold morning, the Bishop, apparently without any special reason for his action, unexpectedly appeared at St. Rose Convent. He had come, he told the portress to offer Holy Mass in the

1. First Chapel of Adoration, 1878. East View of St. Rose Convent. 2. Chapel Built 1874

chapel. The Holy Sacrifice ended, he called for Mother Antonia and addressed her thus: "Last night I could not sleep. In fact, I felt so ill that I decided not to celebrate Mass this morning. Suddenly this postponing of the Perpetual Adoration came to my mind, and I resolved to give my consent. This done, I immediately fell asleep, and this morning I felt so refreshed that I came to offer the Holy Sacrifice to invoke Heaven's blessing upon the undertaking. After a few direct questions concerning funds and the burden it might possibly prove for the Sisters, his Lordship added, "You have my full permission to give the Perpetual Adoration a trial."

Words fail to express Mother Antonia's joy. She showed the Bishop the money she had been setting aside for the purpose, — three hundred dollars, for that time a goodly sum, as also a costly Gothic ostensorium which she had purchased — visible and convincing proofs that her faith in the establishment of the Perpetual Adoration had never wavered.

With that blessed word of the Bishop vibrating in her very soul, Mother Antonia lost no time in preparing a little "holy of holies" for the Divine Prisoner of the Tabernacle. It consisted of a small addition, scarcely more than a large bay window, possibly eighteen feet by twelve, at the southeast corner of St. Rose Convent. In fact, the present St. Michael's corridor which leads to the vestibule of our chapel became the main part of our first Adoration Chapel, and the little bay window added was the sanctuary. Upon entering this corridor, you are before the humble throne of the King of kings. You are almost amazed; on your lips trembles the query: "This the palace of

the Eucharistic King?" And you may add in very truth:

"It is colder than the manger,
Which received His Infant form!"

So it carries you back to Bethlehem, does it? Then all is well. To the Sisters of those days it was truly another Bethlehem; and here, too, as in that solemn midnight centuries ago, adoring angels sang again that sublime refrain, "Gloria in excelsis Deo!" It was on August first, 1878, that Jesus deigned to enter for the first time this lowly abode to receive the praises of those whom He delights to call His own.

Generously does nature unite with the Sisters in paying homage to its Eucharistic Lord; gloriously the King of Day appears on the horizon; not a cloud is seen to mar the beautiful soft blue of heaven; the little sanctuary resplendent with lights and adorned with flowers awaits the Bridegroom's coming. Surrounded by a number of the clergy, the saintly founder of the young community, Bishop Heiss, stands before the altar in the chapel of Maria Angelorum, while the Sisters eagerly listen for the first silvery sound of the little bell that is to announce the advent of their Eucharistic God. "Hoc est enim Corpus meum," falls upon their joyful hearts; the sacred moment of consecration is over, the most momentous event in the history of St. Rose Convent is consummated; for a Consecrated Host now adored on the altar will presently be placed in the monstrance so long awaiting It. In solemn procession, our Eucharistic King will be borne to the little shrine prepared for Him, and so appropriately dedicated to His loving Heart — that Heart which had come but "to cast fire upon the earth."

Mother Antonia's joy is complete; now at last is

realized her heart's fondest desire; and with holy Simeon she could truly exclaim: "Nunc dimittis servum tuum, Domine!" With forty-nine of her religious daughters, she approaches the altar; and, together, like the Wise Men of old, they offer gold, frankincense, and myrrh, by an oblation, perpetual in its extent, perfect in its essence, — the taking of the vows of religion for life, exultingly repeating, "In the simplicity of my heart I have joyfully offered all these things!" This is the first time in the history of the community that perpetual vows were taken.

The ceremonies of that eventful first day of August, 1878, extended through several hours, beginning at seven in the morning and ending at eleven. There was not a member of the happy community who did not participate in a very special manner in the day's celebration. Besides the fifty who pronounced perpetual vows, all other Professed Sisters were privileged to renew their vows either for three or seven years; four novices were admitted to the profession of temporary vows; and eight postulants received the religious habit. The ceremonies of Profession and Reception were followed by a solemn High Mass, during which a sermon in the German tongue was delivered by the Rev. H. Kampschroer, and another in English by Rev. James Schwebach. In fancy, we see the solemn procession after the mass, the postulants robed in white, the novices wearing white wreaths and the Professed Sisters crowned with myrtle, — all reverently accompanying their Lord who has descended from heaven's heights to take up His permanent abode amid His spouses on earth. Slowly the beautiful procession wends its way from the first chapel of Maria Angelo-

rum towards the little shrine of the Sacred Heart, St. Rose's first Adoration Chapel.

On reaching the corridor where the statue of St. Michael now stands, the accompanying clergy make way for the celebrant, Right Reverend Bishop Heiss, — (for this little chapel can accommodate only very few persons). With a thrill of heavenly joy his Lordship deposits his Precious Burden upon the altar.

"Down in adoration falling
Lo! the Sacred Host we hail,"

rises from the lips and hearts of the Sisters around their dear old Cornish organ — still to be found in the novitiate. From His new throne of grace, Jesus blesses the reverent worshipers; his Lordship's solemn tenor breaks forth in the sublime Te Deum; the monstrance containing the Blessed Sacrament is placed in the glass shrine ready to receive it. It is eleven o'clock, August first, 1878, and the ***first hour*** of the ***Perpetual Adoration*** of the ***Blessed Sacrament*** at St. Rose Convent has begun.

"Dear Jesus, now before us
In Thy Sacrament of Love,
Oh! teach us to adore Thee
Like the court of heaven above."

CHAPTER XVII

BISHOP HEISS BECOMES COADJUTOR TO ARCHBISHOP HENNI. SOME OF THE FORMER'S LETTERS

Right Reverend Bishop Heiss! Just exactly what this name meant to the older members of our community, especially to Mother Antonia and, later on, to her successor, Mother Ludovica, the younger Sisters can scarcely realize. As a bishop of the one true fold, he strove to be in all things a living copy of the Good Shepherd. Regarding his relations to our community whose founder he was, no pen, we feel, can fittingly describe the fatherly care he always took of the Sisters' affairs. Charged as he was with the grave responsibilities of a bishopric, harassed by difficulties of all kinds in the administration of his diocese, his days filled to the last with zealous, most fruitful labors, yet how graciously, how condescendingly he could find time to prove his interest even in the most minute detail that concerned the welfare of our community!

The occasions of his visits to the Convent were for the Sisters not merely holidays but holy days as well — "minor festivals," if you will. "Dear Sisters, may you ever strive after greater perfection, and never cease thanking and praising God's goodness for all the graces and blessings bestowed upon the community." This was his customary form of leave-taking, yet, because of its simple sincerity, it never became monotonous, never failed to strike responsive chords in the hearts

of the Sisters, who loved him as their father and revered him as their truest guide.

On March 14, 1880, he had been appointed coadjutor, with the right of succession, to Archbishop Henni of Milwaukee, but his interest in the community at St. Rose, far from suffering by his elevation to this new dignity, was rather increased by it, and if his visits henceforth were rarer, his letters were the more frequent. The bishop was a man of profound erudition, — better still, he was a man of deep, genuine piety as is so evident in all his writings. His letters to the Sisters breathe a sincerity, a sweetness, and an unction all his own. It is in the hope that these letters may recall forgotten joys for those who are privileged to call themselves his spiritual daughters, and be a source of edification to younger members that we have transcribed them here. To our Community in its pioneer days, they were a source of consolation and encouragement; to Mother Antonia, in particular, they were a solace in the trials she had to bear.

St. Francis Seminary, June 10, 1881.

Venerable and Dear Mother Superior:

Since the Feast of St. Anthony falls this year on Monday, and I shall not be able to congratulate you in person, these few lines must suffice.

May our dear Lord, through the intercession of St. Anthony, spare your life for the welfare of the Sisters who show such filial love towards you. May their prayers obtain for you the grace to sanctify your own soul, and to enrich it with the virtues of a perfect life consecrated to Jesus, your heavenly Spouse, that you may by example, prayer, and a loving solicitude encourage a great zeal in your Sisters who likewise will strive after greater perfection. Thus all may prepare the better for the future coming of their Divine Bridegroom.

What I have so often expressed orally, I wish to repeat again on this occasion; namely, that we be ever grateful for the

graces our dear Lord has bestowed upon the community. The memory of the difficulties and opposition it has met with in the past vanishes when we recall the favors it has received. Even contradictions come from the hand of God for our good; and, just at such times, are we offered the best opportunity to show our love for Him, a love purified by those very things of which we may be tempted to complain.

I should wish that the Sisters when reciting the Office would lay great stress upon the following psalms: "Laudate Dominum," "Laudate Dominum de Coelis," and the beautiful "Benedicite." Oh! may they ever recite these with up-lifted hearts; for then the fountain of grace will continue to flow with ever-increasing force.

The Right Reverend Bishop Elect (Flasch) had really made up his mind to go to La Crosse but the time is too short. On the morrow we have ordination here. Among the number is Reverend Lochschmidt of Jefferson, now Father Chrysostom, O.S.B., who used to be Father Obermueller's altar boy, also my own. His Reverend Abbot has permitted him to be ordained and to read his first Mass here. Please, inform Father Obermueller of this.

We will continue to pray for one another, and particularly must the Sisters during the Hours of Adoration remember me. I am convinced that all will go well in La Crosse in future. Best regards to all the Sisters and postulants, and especially to Father Obermueller and the Rev. Administrator, H. Kampschroer.

United in the love of the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, I am,

Your devoted Servant in Christ,
M. HEISS, Episco.

St. Francis Seminary, July, 9, 1881.

Venerable Mother Superior:

I am sorry that I could not give you a decided answer any sooner. The principal cause of my delay has been my illness of a fortnight. On June 27, on my way home from a country mission I was attacked by a serious illness. Had they not sent for a physician immediately, I would hardly have lived through the night. Then soon after, the celebration of the Seminary's Silver Jubilee took place, and I have had very little rest in conse-

quence of this. This past week I have been well one day, and the next day, just the reverse; but to-day I have a "perfect day."

I have always entertained the hope of inducing Bishop Flasch to give your Sisters a retreat. But what do you suppose he did last Monday? Well, he had all his teeth extracted in order to get an entirely new set. He thinks it will be fully three weeks before he can talk well again, and besides he has to prepare for his consecration. To-day he received his "Breve Apostolicum." As soon as all the preliminaries are arranged he will be consecrated, but at this early hour it can not be decided when and where the solemn function will take place.

What is to be done now? There is another urgent claim upon my own already limited time. I still have a short Confirmation tour to make this month. I am not very well acquainted with the Franciscans here, otherwise, I would send one of their Fathers for the Sisters' retreat. After giving all these matters due consideration, I have concluded to give the retreat myself. If God wills, therefore, and my health permits, I have resolved to be in La Crosse, Thursday, July 21st. The retreat will begin on the 22d and end on the 26th. The second retreat will open July 28th, and close the morning of Aug. 1st. There will be sufficient time between the retreats for the necessary arrangements. I thought the retreat of last year would certainly be the last I should ever give; but it may be well that I address all of the Sisters once more.

Archbishop Henni was very low the first of the week, but he has improved since yesterday.

In the fond hope that everything may turn out well, I remain, most respectfully and devotedly

Yours in Christ,

MICHAEL HEISS, Episc.

In the election which followed at the close of this retreat, Mother Antonia was re-elected for the seventh time and Sister Ludovica was chosen for the third time as her Assistant.

Some weeks later, Sept. 1, 1881, the new Bishop, Right Reverend K. Flasch, was installed at La Crosse. Mother Antonia and a number of the Sisters were

present at the Pontifical Mass celebrated on that occasion in St. Joseph's Cathedral. Amid the many events of the day, the new Bishop did not forget the Sisters, but repaired to the Convent in the afternoon where he gave his episcopal blessing and graciously allowed each Sister to kiss his ring.

A letter from Bishop Heiss about this time reads as follows:

St. Francis Seminary, Oct. 15, 1881.

Venerable Mother Superior and all the Good Sisters:

I have not had the opportunity until now to thank you for your hearty congratulations on my Saint's Day, and for the assurance of your prayers before the tabernacle. Many, many thanks! May the dear Lord reward your loving petitions in my behalf with rich blessings, both spiritual and temporal.

I suffer much greater anxiety and have far more cares here than in La Crosse, and I experience very little consolation and joy. But such are the ways of God! Without pains and trouble there is no reward; without combat, no victory and no victor's palm. Since I am rapidly approaching the end of my earthly pilgrimage, it has pleased the Eternal Love to give me abundant opportunities for increasing my store of merit. But that His holy designs may be fulfilled in my regard, and lest instead of storing up merits, I may heap up a weighty account for the Judgment Day, I must needs be supported by prayer. I have but recently made a retreat of eight days in the Capuchin Convent, and it has become clear to me that I must pray especially to be spared from spiritual blindness, that I may meet with a consoling death. Will you also pray for this intention, please?

My house is not yet completed, but I understand it will be soon. So far, I have seen it only from the outside. When it is finished, I shall go to La Crosse to see about the packing of my books, etc.

I have several Confirmation tours to make yet, but must postpone the work for a few weeks on account of my health. I had several attacks of fever, and at present have no appetite. "Attention and care?" I have scarcely any except such as I afford myself — which, you may know, is not much.

The La Crosse climate seems to agree with Right Reverend

Bishop Flasch, for on meeting him here last week I noticed that he looks healthier than usual. Undoubtedly, you have perceived by this time that he more than fills the place of his predecessor. It is a consolation to me that Divine Providence has governed all our concerns and wishes. As for the rest, I am certain that everything will go on well and that the Sisters will enjoy his fatherly protection.

I shall repeat what I have so often said: Let us be ever grateful for the many undeserved graces and benefits which have been ours in the past, and which, if we are animated by the spirit of gratitude, we may hope to enjoy in the future also. If troubles, struggles, and things contrary to nature molest us, we shall willingly bear them; yes, even welcome them as means of expiating our sins. It is true, at times such crosses abound, but never more than is salutary for us; for the Lord will not permit us to be tried beyond our strength. Since I was in La Crosse, I have had occasion to go to Jefferson, and I visited the Convent there. How many of its past memories became vivid to me! How wisely has God ordained everything!

The death of the Most Reverend Archbishop Henni came quite unexpected. He expired calmly, Sept. 7th. Please remember him also in devout prayer.

I have recently written to the Holy Father for the pallium, but whether it will be sent, or whether I must go to Rome myself to get it, I do not know.

To the Class of the last reception I wish to say that they should be very zealous and persevere in their first fervor.

God's grace and blessing be with you all. I remain,

In heartfelt sympathy,

H. HEISS, Episc.

CHAPTER XVIII

MOTHER ANTONIA'S DEATH

"Precious," says Holy Writ, "in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." May we be permitted to add: "Precious, too, in the eyes of their fellow mortals?" We feel confident that the details of Mother Antonia's beautiful death cannot fail to interest as well as edify not only those who have been privileged to call her by the tender name of "mother," but all others who may have caught from these pages even a slight glimpse into a soul especially favored by its Creator.

In the year, 1875, Mother's health, for a long time feeble, notably declined, and for a time, little hope of her recovery was entertained. She prayed, "Lord, if Thy poor and lowly servant be of any service to the community make me well again." The community likewise was virtually storming heaven for her recovery. God heard these fervent prayers, and Mother slowly recovered.

Remarkable as all the saints of God have been for their love of the poor and unfortunate, she cherished a special affection for the bereft lambkins of the Master's fold, the orphan children, and delighted in visiting them. In the spring of 1881, she went, as often before, to see her dear orphan children in Sparta. This however, was to be her last trip to these dear ones.

The days of bud and blossom glided into the days of leafy spray and golden sunshine, bringing the Sisters home for their annual vacation; and Mother Antonia's genial welcome to each returning Sister seemed this year to vie in warmth with the summer sun. Later

on, her farewells, too, were noticeably more maternal, eliciting the general comment, "Mother is unusually kind this year." Yet, her activity was such that few, if any, of the departing Sisters realized they were bidding her a long and last farewell.

On Nov. 28, 1881, Bishop Heiss' residence was completed, and Mother Antonia, ever solicitous about his Lordship's welfare, hastened to send him Sister Beatrice and Sister Juliana for the household duties. During the month of December her illness took on a serious character, and she was confined to bed a great part of the time. At intervals, however, she was very busily engaged in the making of sacred vestments. Strange to say, they were all black, — chasuble, cope, and even a set of dalmatics, — something unthought-of and thus far not much needed in the community. May we surmise that she was consciously or unconsciously preparing for her own funeral services? So it really was, for these vestments were all used for the first time on the day of her funeral.

Like St. Francis of Assisi, Mother Antonia's love for the mystery of the Incarnation was marvelous. The Feast of the Nativity was the feast of feasts for her. This year she seemed to prepare for it with unusual eagerness and holy joy. Still she had her interior trials, as all interior souls must expect. At times she suffered keen mental anguish, especially the anguish of doubt in regard to the outcome of her life's greatest work, — the establishment of the Perpetual Adoration. Had she, perhaps, laid upon the Sisters a burden that might some day prove too heavy? Again, would the community always be able to meet the expenses connected therewith? These and similar thoughts persistently recurred to her. At such times the Sisters lovingly assured her that their loyalty to this sublime

cause would never waver; nay, that the very anchor of their hope for the future stability of the community would be an ever-increasing love for the Holy Eucharist, and an inviolable fidelity in maintaining, — no matter what sacrifice it might require — the ***Perpetual Adoration.***

After Christmas, Mother Antonia, ever active in the direction of the community, called her Assistant, Sister Ludovica Keller from St. Joseph's School in the city to remain in the Motherhouse until after Easter when she desired her to open and take charge of a mission in La Salle, Ill. Sister Ludovica, however, was destined in the order of Providence for something quite different, — to close the eyes of her beloved Mother General in death, and then to take up the cross which the latter had been permitted to exchange for the crown.

The Sisters had grown accustomed to the sudden changes in their Mother's physical condition, which permitted her one day to labor energetically in the interest of the community, the next, possibly, to be confined to her bed. No one suspected, therefore, that her end was so near, when on the eve of January 25, she directed her secretary, Sister Xavier Keller, to wake her for Holy Communion the following morning, Thursday. In those days the clarion call to daily Communion had not yet sounded; and as Thursday was not a regular Communion day in the community, Sister Xavier gently remonstrated: "Reverend Mother, you are ailing; you ought not rise so early, if you can rest." But Mother Antonia, who had been permitted by her director to receive Holy Communion on Thursday in the little Adoration Chapel, ever since that first day of August when Jesus took up His abode there, could not be persuaded to forego this great privilege. She sweetly

yet firmly insisted: "I must receive Holy Communion to-morrow."

Early the next morning, Sister Xavier, on finding her superior in deep and peaceful slumber, hesitated to awaken her; but the insistent note in Mother's voice on the previous night seemed to ring in her ears, impelling her to comply with the command. With respectful consideration and true delicacy, therefore, Sister Xavier awakened her; saying, almost apologetically, "Mother I think you should not rise for Holy Communion this morning. You know you are not feeling well." But scarcely had the last word died on her lips, when Mother Antonia repeated most earnestly, "I must receive Holy Communion this morning!"

Long and fervent was her thanksgiving, — so long that good Father Obermueller remarked, "She kneels there entirely too long for a sick person." Did she, perhaps, in that long, heart-to-heart converse with her Divine Spouse, hear this invitation, "Come home with Me, and I will make thee presents?" Some of her words on this particular morning seem to indicate that she realized her life story had reached its final chapter, yea, the very end; for, a light breakfast over, she again hastened to the Adoration Chapel, whence she returned some time later, her countenance so radiant that the Sisters perceived a supernatural joy flooding her soul as she entered their workroom. After a few pious exhortations, she retired to her own private room to take up with her secretary certain important matters, some of which necessitated for the latter a trip to town.

Mother Antonia glanced out of the window; and behold! nature was just then displaying on her ever-varied and beautiful panorama a scene of purity and peace. As she watched the ermine flakes falling softly in showers, she remarked: "Thus, too, are God's choic-

est graces falling in gentle showers upon our souls," Then she added, "Is it not cruel of me, Sister Xavier, to send you out in this weather?" Anxious to execute the obedience confided to her, Sister Xavier made light of the snow storm, and was permitted to go to town. A little later a bouquet which had spent its perfumes at the Savior's feet in the Adoration Chapel was brought in. On seeing it, she said, "Thus we also wither and die."

About 10:30 A. M., she was called to Father Obermueller's room. Reverend Louis Lay of Waumandee had brought a parcel to her from the Sisters at his mission. She greeted the good priest cordially, received the package from his hand, thanked him for it, and proceeded to untie the string, — the parcel dropped from her stiffening fingers. She was led to her room and the Sisters hastened thither, but she directed them to return to their occupation. They obeyed, for none suspected, as yet, that the hand of death was upon her. Sister Ludovica, her Assistant, and Sister Michaela were untiring in their efforts to restore circulation in the benumbed arm which Mother in the first instant had said was only "asleep." Their efforts proved futile, however; for their patient also soon fell asleep, — a gentle sleep at first; but, to the deep sorrow of all, very alarming conditions developed early in the afternoon. Though she still slumbered, she breathed heavily. Father Obermueller now became convinced of what he had at first surmised, but had hesitated to say: "It is a paralytic stroke." Whereupon, he hastened for the holy oils and administered the Sacrament of Extreme Unction.

No struggle announced her departure. Sister Clara Leinfelder knelt in what is now Music Room Three, at the foot of the deathbed of the one who had been to

her at once aunt and Mother Superior, and, in a clear voice, recited the prayers for the dying, while the Sisters kneeling around mingled their tears with their responses. Just at the hour made forever sacred by the death of Him in Whose footprints she had followed — three o'clock in the afternoon — Mother Antonia's great, good heart ceased to beat. Of her it might be truly said, "She fell asleep in the Lord." She had prepared a place for Him on earth. Can we doubt that He had a place awaiting her in the eternal mansions?

Oh, Mother! Have you reached that mystic shore?
Then pray for us, as you have done before.
The fervor of your prayers, so good, so true,
Will bless our lives and all that we shall do.
On earth, you long have been our guiding star,
Forget us not! Oh, guide us from afar!
So that we too — when ready to embark
Upon that unknown sea, so deep, so dark,
May find at last a home in Jesus' Heart.

Before the sun had set on that sad twenty-sixth day of January, 1882, all of our mission houses were in deep mourning, the news of Mother Antonia's death having been flashed over the wires to the sorrow-stricken Sisters. The Archbishop also had been notified by telegram. Later on each mission received a copy of the following letter:

La Crosse, Wis., Feb. 7, 1882.

Dear Sisters:

You have already received the overwhelmingly sad news of our dear Mother's death which occured on January 26. Unexpectedly, suddenly, this devout soul was called to her God.

She assisted at Holy Mass that morning and communicated most devoutly. After this she knelt for a long time in devout adoration before the Blessed Sacrament, so long that it attracted my attention. But who would have thought that this

was to be her last adoration and thanksgiving in this her cherished chapel? After leaving the chapel she was unusually cheerful and happy until eleven o'clock when her right hand became paralyzed, and the paralysis soon extended to the chest. At three o'clock this loving heart ceased to beat. Our Heavenly Father called her home to reward her many sorrows, her cares, and her struggles. Her earthly career was finished; her life work completed. Therefore, dear Sisters, do not be too sad. Your dear Mother lives in heaven, and awaits your advent thither — never more to be separated.

On Monday, January 30th, her remains were laid temporarily in the vault of the Mater Dolorosa Chapel. Most Reverend M. Heiss celebrated the Pontifical Requiem Mass, and the Right Reverend K. Flasch delivered the sermon. Several priests celebrated Holy Mass on the different altars and showed much sympathy. The Most Reverend Archbishop, having consulted the assembled Sisters, decided to take an early step towards the election of a new Mother General, and ordered that it take place on the first Sunday in Lent, February 26th. He furthermore ordered that on said date every local Superior be present at the Motherhouse, and hand in the sealed votes of the Sisters of her respective mission. In order to secure an early and decisive election, he proposes the names of Sister Ludovica Keller and Sister Rose Francois, but reminds you that every Sister is free to vote as she thinks proper. Each Sister, therefore, is requested to write two names — one for Mother General and one for Mother Assistant. During the intervening time all should beg God to help and enlighten them in their choice.

Soliciting all this through Jesus and Mary, and recommending to your prayers the dear departed Venerable Mother, I am

Your devoted servant,

F. X. OBERMUELLER.

Praised be Jesus Christ!

N. B.—Candlemas Day, the community had six wax candles burning over the vault where Mother's remains are placed.

Since an earlier chapter of this volume gives us a fairly complete biography of Mother Antonia, we shall devote the closing lines of this to a resumé of the more

visible results of her untiring activity. When she was called upon to guide the destinies of her young community, it numbered but eighteen Professed Religious, and did not possess even a Motherhouse. At her death there were one hundred twenty-seven Professed Sisters, twenty-five Novices, and eight Postulants, laboring in a vast field comprising thirty-two missions and two orphan homes. At the time of her election, we remember that the community depended solely upon the Seminary for its financial support; and we know, too, how detrimental this was not only to its expansion but to its very existence, since the Seminary itself had to rely upon alms for its own maintenance. At the time of her demise, as the older members looked back to the time when the failure of the Salesianum would infallibly have spelled the dissolution of their little Sisterhood, how they must have blessed their dear dead Mother through whose unflinching determination they could now call their own — the beautiful, spacious mother convent, St. Rose, and its four affiliated houses.

But towering far above Mother Antonia's other achievements, is that crowning event in her life's story — the establishment, amidst well-nigh insuperable obstacles, of the ***Perpetual Adoration.*** Father Obermueller styled her the "valiant woman;" and we, with even our very limited knowledge of the heroic courage she required to triumph completely over difficulties which to one less intrepid would have proven insurmountable, agree that she richly merits this title.

CHAPTER XIX

A NEW MOTHER GENERAL IS ELECTED. INDIAN MISSION ACCEPTED

On Feb. 26, 1882, just one month after Mother Antonia's death, in obedience to the instructions of Archbishop Heiss concerning the election of a Sister for the office of Mother General, the local superiors of all the mission houses assembled at St. Rose Convent. In a letter written a few days previous to this, the Most Reverend Archbishop announced his intention of being present at the election. The letter read as follows:

Milwaukee, Wis., Feb. 22, 1882.

Venerable Sister Assistant and all the dear Sisters:

Your letter of the 20th inst. gave me much pleasure and consolation; for it convinced me that there is great love and perfect unity among the Sisters; and, although the bereavement of their Mother is still fresh in their minds, the remembrance of God's goodness and of the many blessings bestowed upon the community through her hand, and especially the memory of her heroic example, fully console them. I shall, God willing, be in La Crosse on the coming Friday; or, at all events, on Saturday morning. I shall have to leave again Monday evening in order to be at home on Tuesday morning.

I have met with many disagreeable things these last four weeks; and to-morrow, likely, I shall meet with more. But in all of these matters, I rely upon your prayers, especially the prayers of the Adoration. Our Divine Lord surely cannot refuse the petitions of those who render Him a Perpetual Adoration accompanied by so much love and self-immolation.

Many thanks for the photograph! It is still a sad thing for me to think that this good Mother has really gone forever—

yes, forever, out of this transitory life. We may, however, all hope to meet in heaven amidst joy and glory.

Recommending all to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, I remain,

Your devoted spiritual Father,
MICHAEL HEISS, Archbishop.

Faithful to his promise, the Archbishop arrived at St. Rose Convent on Feb. 25, the eve of the election. On the following morning both he and Bishop Flasch offered the Holy Sacrifice in the Chapel of Maria Angelorum, and just previous to the election, which was held at nine A. M., the Archbishop delivered a sermon.

Sister Ludovica Keller was elected Mother General and Sister Rose Francois, Mother Assistant. The unanimity of spirit so manifest in the election greatly consoled His Grace, since he, as well as Bishop Flasch and Father Obermueller, had entertained grave fears for the community's future on the death of Mother Antonia. His confirmation of the election, therefore, was very touching. Calling the newly-elected Superiors to the communion railing, he tenderly imparted to them his blessing, and then addressed the community as follows: "Yes, dear Sisters, go forth courageously; for, on the path of unity and love, God's grace will continue to precede and accompany you. Bring henceforth unto the new Mother the same confidence you have manifested in the past towards her worthy predecessor and she, in return, will guide you to the happy goal you are destined to reach. Oh! how I delight in this spirit of unity and love! I trust it may continue to animate all; for where it dwells, there also God's blessing rests." Uttered with much warmth and tenderness, these words deeply affected the Sisters.

At the time of Mother Antonia's death, the ground was frozen to such a depth and the weather was so

VEN. MOTHER M. LUDOVICA KELLER

SISTER M. ROSE FRANCOIS

severe, that it was well-nigh impossible to dig a grave; hence, her remains lay in a vault until Feb. 27, when they were removed to the chapel cemetery. Over the new mound many a tear was shed by the various mission Sisters upon their return to St. Rose Convent that summer, but, adoring the designs of God, their afflicted hearts uttered a whole-souled "Fiat," and found the consolation that resignation always brings. The truly maternal kindness of their new Mother, moreover, went far towards alleviating their grief.

Mother Ludovica's first official visit was to the orphan children at Sparta. The first mission opened by her was among the poor and lowly on the Bad River Reservation, in the wilds of Northern Wisconsin. We pause to admire this noble work of Christian charity, for it really merits both our time and attention.

The little Indian village of Odanah lies in the very heart of a region sanctified by the labors of the saintly and intrepid missionaries Marquette, Allouez, and Baraga, and immortalized by Longfellow. His lines:

"On the shores of Gitche Gumee
Of the shining Big Sea Water,"

give its location quite exactly, since the Bad River Reservation, in which the village is situated, is bounded on the north and east by the waters of Lake Superior, "Gitche Gumee." Here it was, among the gentle Chippewa, that the poet of the fireside gathered those quaint, mellow words that make the lines of his charming "Hiawatha" swell into melodious cadences, until we fancy we hear the cataract's laughter —

"Hear the falls of Minnehaha,"

for the Chippewa language is very musical. Yet "Odanah," in the Chippewa tongue, means nothing

more than "town;" and even this at the date of which we write, 1883, was a misnomer; for no one could then have surmised that a town would ever exist there. To-day it is a town, however, numbering over two thousand inhabitants, many of these being white men who have been drawn thither by the lumber industry which has been extensively carried on there for some years.

That Odanah could not be reached by rail thirty-seven years ago, needs scarcely be told. Two other means of access there were to it, however, from Ashland, the nearest station: one by Indian trail, a distance of ten miles through the woods; the other, just as long, across the "Shining Big Sea Water" in a frail canoe in summer, on a sled during winter. Mother Ludovica herself accompanied Sisters Cunegunda Urbany and Emmanuela Klaus thither, and found Odanah to be even more desolate than she had expected. It was pre-eminently the home of the wild deer and the Indian hunter. Even the wigwam was not much in evidence, for the density of the forest shut it out from view. That on the day of the Sisters' arrival not a "pale face" greeted them, save that of the priest, Father John Gafron, O.F.M., we may conclude from the fact that even ten years later, if a white man appeared in the vicinity of the school, a Sister thought she had sufficient reason for calling her companions to the window to enjoy the novel sight.

Imagine, therefore, Mother Ludovica's feelings as she bade her two missionaries — for such they were in the strictest sense of the term — a maternal farewell. Though her steps were directed homeward, her heart and thoughts were with her daughters in that little log school in the wilderness. With an Indian as her sole companion, she seated herself in the rude conveyance

that was to take her to Ashland, and as they passed slowly enough, doubtless, over Gitche Gumee's glassy bosom, she regretted not the silence of her Indian guide; for, in fervent prayer she was commending to Divine Providence the safe-keeping of her two dear Sisters and the success of a venture so manifestly dark.

Did these earnest petitions enable her to soar on wings of faith above the surrounding darkness, pierce the regions of light and hope, and see there in part what only the Lord then knew about the Odanah Mission? Was there, perhaps, in her inmost soul an abiding conviction that she had most effectually provided for the safety and consolation of her missionary Sisters by bringing with her the necessary articles for the humble throne of the meek and lowly, yet All-powerful King? Though the Sisters were, in a very certain sense, at the mercy of their environment, shut off from communication — at least from direct communication — with the civilized world, had not He Who led captivity captive, lovingly deigned to take up His abode with them? Did not the very lowliness of the abode, a tabernacle prepared by a poor Child of the Forest, a Chippewa Indian, have a special attraction for Him Who was content with Bethlehem's rude manger? May we not safely conclude that the little log school of Odanah became for the Chippewa Indians, in a spiritual sense, what in ancient days, the Pharos of Alexandria was to the Mediterranean — a sort of miniature sun by night? Was it not, through the Sacramental Presence, a veritable "Pillar of Fire whence heavenly light and divine warmth radiated far and wide, leading souls encompassed by the darkness of paganism into another Promised Land — Christ's Church?

Standing to-day upon the vantage ground of a long, varied experience, and casting a retrospective glance

over the seven and thirty years that link the present with the past, we may plainly discern the finger of God in the results which the Odanah Mission has produced. The tiny mustard seed, planted in 1883, has become a mighty tree; the log cabin has been replaced by a large school wherein hundreds of pale-faced children and many more hundreds of those whose complexion the poet likens to "the shadowed livery of the burnished sun" have been taught not only the one thing necessary but also the arts and crafts of the white man. The barest description of many of the death-bed scenes in those Indian homes would cause even a religious to exclaim: "May my last end be like theirs!" The four gold stars on the School's Service Flag, gleaming amid a cluster of blue ones numbering close to a hundred, prove — were proof needed — that Patriotism is twin sister of Religion, and that Christian education, even in the case of the frequently misrepresented Red Man, is certainly worth while.

That our Indian Mission at Odanah is most consoling to Mother Ludovica may be inferred from a remark made by her to one of the Sisters stationed there, "I feel that the sacrifices made by our Sisters in Odanah have won God's choicest blessings for the entire community."

To conclude this chapter, however, without stating that the Odanah Mission was undertaken at the request of the Franciscan Fathers of the St. Louis Province would be, to say the least, leaving a good word unsaid. Our great American poet, John Boyle O'Reilly, puts it strongly, perhaps, but truthfully enough

"The kindly word unspoken is a sin."

Be that as it may, it is only just to acknowledge the good done by others. And, though heaven alone,

doubtless, contains a true record of the untiring activities of that Order of devoted priests in behalf of the Indians of the Great Lake region and other sections of our country, we must state here that the little log school at Odanah was a tiny but telling evidence of Father John Gafron's zeal for the salvation of the Red Man. At the request of this zealous Franciscan Friar, his fellow religious, Father Casimir Vogt, who labored long and patiently among the Indians of Wisconsin and Arizona, made a special trip to La Crosse, in those days of slow travel, to secure our Sisters for the Odanah Mission. The impression made by Father Casimir on this occasion still lives. Speaking of that missionary's ardent appeal to Reverend Mother for help, Father Obermueller said, "You must give Father Casimir Sisters for the Odanah Mission; he is one of God's Saints."

CHAPTER XX

OUR HOSPITALS

Many problems vital to the interest of the community, especially those of rapid expansion, had just begun to assert their importance at the time of Mother Antonia's death. From the first, therefore, and throughout the long years during which she has been charged with the direction of the community, Mother Ludovica has been engaged in meeting and solving these problems. One of the most important of these was the establishment of our first hospital.

Previous to 1883, though the rule expressly provided for the care of the sick in hospitals, it had not been considered possible — if, indeed, the many other matters of those days permitted its consideration at all — to attempt this laudable work. Now, however, Right Reverend Bishop Flasch and Father Obermueller thought the time had come when the Sisters should undertake this work of charity in addition to those of teaching and of caring for orphans. Father Obermueller in particular was of the opinion that His Grace, Archbishop Heiss, who had framed the Rule for the Community should either permit the Sisters to enter upon this undertaking at once or allow the provision referring to it to be stricken from the Constitutions. Accordingly, he instructed Mother Ludovica to go to the Most Reverend Archbishop in Milwaukee and urgently request his permission to begin at once the erection of a building for hospital purposes. But here, as in the establishment of the Perpetual Adoration, his Grace was rather slow in giving his consent. He was an exceedingly prudent

man, and in temporal as well as spiritual affairs, his motto seems to have been: "Be sure you are right; then go ahead! — and, "Absolutely no backward steps!" When Mother Ludovica presented her petition, therefore, he calmly said, "I'll sleep over it." And, sleep over it he did — several nights, it appears.

After waiting some days for a decision, Mother Ludovica resolved to do as Mother Antonia had done in an instance the reader has probably not forgotten; namely, to leave the matter to the Lord. Whereupon, she told His Grace's housekeeper, our Sister Beatrice Whalen, that she could wait no longer for the pending decision, that she must return to La Crosse, since other matters were awaiting her attention there. Sister Beatrice told the Archbishop of Reverend Mother's intention, and he quietly replied, "There is no need of such haste." He then expressed a desire to have Reverend Mother remain in Milwaukee for the coming Sunday. She did so, and her patience was rewarded by the grant of the desired permission with this stipulation, however, on the part of His Grace, that only ten thousand dollars should be expended for the building.

On being informed of the project, Mr. Leinfelder offered the community at actual cost three lots between Tenth and Eleventh Streets, fronting Market, as a site for the proposed hospital. His offer was accepted; the lots were purchased; and in later years the remainder of the block was added thereto. Father Obermueller personally supervised the construction of the building, and Mr. Leinfelder again appears as architect and builder.

Though the work was carried on in the unostentatious manner characteristic of the community's undertakings, and the site at that time outside of the city limits, scarcely was the ground broken, when it became generally known that La Crosse, twenty-seven years

after its incorporation, was at last to have a hospital. Time and again in her past history, had some of her prominent citizens endeavored to launch a movement that would result in securing such an institution. The need was keenly felt and generally acknowledged, but the hospital, now an absolute necessity, was then only a desideratum; hence, the efforts manifested in this direction at various times by the more enterprising inhabitants of the city failed to materialize. These efforts were not, however, as sincere efforts rarely are, wholly lost. Past failures had quickened in various individuals a thorough appreciation of such attempts, and among those who expressed a decided interest in the proposed hospital were, as might naturally be expected, the doctors of the city.

Mother Ludovica, however, frankly told the latter that the community was not quite prepared for the undertaking, since none of the Sisters had received special training as nurses. "Give me," exclaimed one of these enthusiastic physicians, "two energetic Sisters, and I will instruct them!" How well he and his confreres succeeded, or how apt their pupils were, those can testify who have known our Sister Matilda, of beloved memory, and our present Sister Theodora, for these were the two Sisters whose training began then and there. And here, in due appreciation of generous services freely given by the members of the medical profession, we are happy to state that, since the erection of the hospital in 1883, time has not weakened but rather strengthened that noble spirit of helpfulness and co-operation with the Sisters which animated the physicians of those early days. This generous wholesouled disposition is especially conspicuous in each and every member of the hospital's present large medical staff. The promptings of gratitude naturally urge the

ST. FRANCIS HOSPITAL, MAIN ENTRANCE

individual mention of these generous benefactors, but this would far outrun the space allotted for this chapter.

In less than two years after Mother Antonia's death, the hospital had become a reality. Mother Ludovica selected her Assistant, Sister Rose Francois, to take charge of the institution, and Sister Matilda Lang, who had by that time several months of training, was appointed head nurse. These two, with Sister Leonarda Hamentien, Sister Clementia Kelly, and Sister Hieronyma Zwank made up the entire hospital staff of Sisters for the arduous and varied activities connected with the opening of such an institution in those days of crude methods.

On Dec. 23, 1883, the hospital was dedicated to St. Francis of Assisi by our present Right Reverend Bishop James Schwebach, at that time Vicar General to his Lordship Right Reverend K. Flasch, the latter being then in Rome with the Most Reverend Archbishop M. Heiss. Though three marine patients were admitted Dec. 31, 1883, the formal opening of the hospital did not take place until New Year's Day, 1884. Some months later, Sister Frederica Johnston and Sister Theodora Burns were added to the staff of Sisters previously mentioned.

A word about the hospital's pioneer Sisters will hardly be out of place here. Several of them, we have every reason to believe, have heard that most desirable of invitations, that soul-thrilling: "Come, ye blessed! I was sick and you visited Me!" Here memory distinctly recalls the loved forms of two of those dear departed who, by their long years of devotion to suffering humanity, have deserved to hear this blessed invitation. Sister Rose gave herself heart and soul to the service of the sick for twenty-one years; and now, even after

her demise of sixteen years, her memory is lovingly enshrined in the hearts of many whose pillow of pain she helped to soothe and whose souls she nerved, by her sincere charity and unaffected piety, to bear for Christ's sake the sufferings from which nature ever shrinks.

Sister Matilda of beloved memory, who was so closely associated with Sister Rose, and who was destined to survive and succeed her as Superior of St. Francis Hospital for eight years, was privileged to give twenty-eight years of a highly active life to the same worthy cause. From the day she took up the work until her summons home was issued by the Master, she was unceasingly employed either in caring directly for the sick or in adding greatly to their comforts by her untiring activity.

How fitting and how easy it would be to dwell here at length upon the labors of those two dear, departed Sisters. Yet volumes may sometimes be crowded into one brief phrase. Speaking of Sister Matilda's death, an old inmate of the hospital said: "When her corpse was carried out, there was a lump in every man's throat and a tear in every woman's eye;" and this terse remark, equally applicable to both these dear Sisters, is only one of many concerning them that might be here noted down.

Sister Leonarda, Sister Clementia, and Sister Hieronyma have long since been called to their eternal reward. Sisters Frederica and Theodora have spent the greater part of the morning, all of the noontide, and are now dedicating the golden sunset of their consecrated lives to the suffering inmates of St. Francis Hospital. They are at present the only members of our community whose personal history is closely linked to the hospital's earliest days. Still, the history of St. Francis Hospital is for many of our dear Sisters the

story of their daily lives — a story recorded, no doubt, in the Book of Life and, we have reason to think, in the hearts of the suffering to whom they have ministered.

An idea of the original size of the hospital, the cramped conditions then existing, and the very meager facilities it afforded, may be gleaned from the fact that during the first years some of the Sisters rarely slept two successive nights in the same place. Their beds must have been very portable affairs, since one night they might be placed in the corridor, the next, in the attic. After all, they had little use for stationary beds, and a simple couch or chair at the bedside of some sufferer was sufficient for the little sleep they might snatch at odd intervals, since the number of Sisters was so small that it did not admit a division of labor, as at present. That the same Sisters should render services by night and by day, as exigencies required, was at that time taken for granted.

Neither Kny-Scherer's, nor sterilizer of any other make was then available. Water for sterilizing purposes was heated on the kitchen stove and carried upstairs to the operating room; and this department — well, its equipment, or rather, lack of the same, would simply give our present-day notions a rather violent shock. Gauze was baked to destroy any lurking germs; and occasionally, too, with absolute certainty all germs were destroyed, but it was quite as certain also that the gauze was destroyed, for — alas! it was burned.

We take for granted, however, that this happened but rarely, since gauze was far too precious to be burned except, perhaps, when it had entirely outlived its usefulness. Indeed, it was mainly the scarcity of funds that caused the Archbishop to think so long and deeply before consenting to the erection of the hospi-

tal. Then, as now, diseases were more plentiful than money, and the Sisters had frequently to wonder how they could maintain the equilibrium between Debit and Credit. But God has, undoubtedly, blessed the work; for, since its erection in 1883, St. Francis Hospital has treated over 75,000 patients; the number cared for during the year 1919 alone being 3,397, while data for 40,888 surgical operations may be found on the records. From these statistics it is evident that modern hospital apparatus has solved practically all the difficulties which confronted our Sister nurses in the past. One harassing old-time problem still remains, however, which constantly asserts itself, and that despite the fact that several large additions have been made to the original building — the question of accommodating the ever-increasing number of its patients.

We would fain dwell at some length, were it permissible in this brief history, upon the good work done at St. Anthony's Hospital, Carroll, Iowa, since its erection June 15, 1905; as also at St. Mary's Hospital, Sparta, Wis., which was opened with the most encouraging prospects July 15, 1915. Both of these institutions have been taxed to their utmost capacity ever since their opening, and, although St. Mary's is the younger daughter, it bids fair to rival in future its elder sister.

The blessing of God, so visibly manifested in the growth and general efficiency of our hospitals, is in itself a sufficient reward for the charity daily exercised within these walls. Strikingly does it recall the promise, "He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord, and He will repay." But over and above even this is the holy joy, that sweetest of consolations which the Sisters feel when they have been instrumental in restoring a lost sheep to the arms of the Good Shepherd.

ST. MARY'S HOSPITAL, SPARTA, WIS.

ST. ANTHONY'S HOSPITAL, CARROLL, IOWA

ST. FRANCIS HOSPITAL, MARKET STREET

JUBILEE ODE

1883 — 1908

The cycle of time has plunged forward,
In its rapid, untrammeled flight,
And to-day we behold St. Francis
All sheened in a silvery light.
Through the years that have flown in succession,
And we number them twenty-five,
She has borne her Excelsior banner,
While breasting the wind and the tide.

So to-day, as a queen we crown her,
With the Jubilee's diadem fair,
All silver'd and gemmed with good wishes,
All jewel'd with true friendship's pray'r.
Ah, those years in their silvery settings,
How they merit our tribute of praise,
As, glist'ning with noble endeavor,
They gleam on our backward gaze.

St. Francis, long mayest thou prosper,
Beneath the fair smile of God's sun,
Till the ages inscribe in gold letters
Thy record of deeds nobly done.
May thy banner, to-day by time silver'd
E'er to Charity's fair breeze unfold,
Till the years at their looms weave another
Of purest and brightest of gold.

May our Father who seeth in secret,
E'er bless with His strong right hand
Thy Sisterhood, noble, undaunted,
In their work so unselfishly grand.
For the world's vain esteem is beneath them,
Their aim, like the cross on thy tower,
Hath sanctified thy foundation,
And hath blessed e'en thy first natal hour.

As upward it pointeth toward heaven,
Directing our tho'ts e'er on high,
So their aim tends to Him who reigns o'er us,
While they work 'neath His all-seeing eye.
Then we'll leave unto Him who reads rightly,
Men's hearts by the light of His love,
To reward with a crown everlasting
In the bright realms of glory above.

CHAPTER XXI

NEW CHAPEL OF THE PERPETUAL ADORATION. CHAPLAINS OF THE COMMUNITY

"That is the end of the Perpetual Adoration at St. Rose!" This was the impression Mother Antonia's death created in the minds of some, and the gloomy foreboding found expression in the above or similar words. This happily untrue remark recalls a cold morning in the early spring of 1878; and we see Mother Antonia's face radiant with happiness, for Right Reverend Bishop Heiss has just said, "You have my permission to give the Perpetual Adoration a trial." He did not at first approve it absolutely, therefore, much less did he mean that, come what might, the community would be oliged to maintain it.

Seven years had elapsed since that memorable morning, and, think you, the Sisters had grown weary of entertaining their Divine Guest, of kneeling at His blessed feet in the little shrine hastily prepared for the Perpetual Adoration? By way of answer, we offer the following striking analogy. When the patriotic Greek of by-gone days set out to found a new colony, he took with him from the mother city sacred fire with which to kindle the venerated flame on the new hearth; and, once lighted, it must be maintained at any sacrifice. Nor need we seek in distant times or far-off lands for inspiring examples. Recorded on the pages of our own beloved Country's history, is a beautiful illustration of devotion to the parental hearth, a literal fulfillment of the injunction — "to keep the home fires burning." Carried in a kettle from the family fireside dur-

ing the days of frontier life when a fire meant so much to the immigrant, live coals were tended with the utmost care through the long journey westward, never allowed to die out; and then, as the weeks ripened into years, the original feeling of necessity which prompted their preservation was replaced by a spirit of profound veneration. So it has come to pass that fire kindled on the family hearth has burned unceasingly during the long period of a hundred years.

But what has all this to do with the adoration at St. Rose? Just this: The fire lighted by the Redeemer Himself and fed day and night, not by descendants of an ancient family, nor, as in the days of pagan Rome, by vestals forced thereto, but by consecrated virgins, willing sentinels, has never smouldered. Surely these could not be less loyal, less devoted, nor inspired by less perfect motives? Had the Sisters not asked on that memorable first day of August, 1878, when Jesus took possession of His little shrine, the miniature chapel of the Perpetual Adoration, — had they not asked for the fervor of angels and the ardor of seraphim wherewith to adore Him? And think you a fire thus tended could smoulder?

It was not, therefore, a question of abandoning the Adoration that engrossed the Sisters' thoughts in 1885, but rather the ardent hope of preparing a becoming dwelling for their Eucharistic King. The extreme lowliness of the little chapel is familiar to our readers; and it was this, doubtless, as well as the personal inconveniences the Sisters suffered therein that strengthened their determination to erect a more suitable structure. The element of cold in the primitive chapel has been previously touched upon, and when to remedy this matter, a stove was placed in the little shrine, one scarcely knew which of the two discomforts was the

more uncomfortable — the piercing cold or the intense heat. Then, too, the air deprived of its life-giving element by the six candles constantly burning, was rendered almost stifling. And here it may not be out of place to add that at first only two of the candles were of wax, Right Reverend Bishop Heiss having granted a dispensation in this regard on account of the extreme poverty of the community.

The first attempt at improving the unhygienic condition created by the burning candles resulted in separating the little sanctuary from the body of the chapel by glass doors, and placing the prie-dieu for the adoring Sisters just outside of the sanctuary, the little "holy of holies." This answered the purpose from the standpoint of sanitation but not from that of reverence; for the smoke that accumulated on the glass doors necessitated their frequent cleansing, so this arrangement was considered not in keeping with the sacred character of the place.

Necessity has been styled "the Mother of Invention," and here the truth of the aphorism is demonstrated no less admirably than in greater achievements. Tubes were now placed above the burning candles and passed through apertures in the wall. The smoke was thus carried out of the chapel. Crude affairs they were adding nothing to the beauty of the sacred place; but the same fertile minds that planned this feature also found a way of offsetting its homeliness, and even of adding to the simple beauty of the little shrine. Deft fingers, prompted by loving hearts, now fashioned beautiful vines laden with rich clusters to serve as a screen for the smoke tubes. In the second chapel, some details of which we are about to consider, these smoke conductors were led into a chimney expressly built for the purpose; while in our present chapel the contrivance

ST. ROSE CONVENT, East View. No. 1, Second Chapel of Adoration

has been so perfected, that the conductors have been placed within its thick walls.

The chapel which was now planned to supersede the little shrine was a worthy structure forty-four feet in length, twenty-two in width, and thirty in height; and it was so closely annexed to the main part of the original shrine that the latter became the entrance thereto, even as at this day it is the entrance to our present chapel of Maria Angelorum. The tiny sanctuary, or the little "holy of holies," as we have styled it, having been torn down to give place to the new building, the Blessed Sacrament was now exposed on the side altar in the Chapel of Maria Angelorum. The completed chapel was beautiful, and in its day fully satisfied all intimately concerned. To say that its decoration was in charge of Mr. Liebig is all sufficient. His unquestionable ability in this regard has been so thoroughly demonstrated in our present chapel that comment thereon would be superfluous.

June 10, 1886, was the day set apart for the consecration of our first Chapel proper of Adoration, and although everything had been planned in keeping with the dignity of the occasion, all were conscious throughout the beautiful ceremonies of a prevailing note of sadness. Father Obermueller, for nearly twenty-one years Chaplain of the Community, lay at death's door. In fact, his demise is so intimately connected with this solemnity that it cannot be out of place to consider it in connection therewith.

New Year's Day, 1886, seems to have brought to Father Obermueller, instead of some desirable gift, failing health. He was, moreover, well advanced in years, having almost completed his seventy-sixth year. By February 3, the Feast of St. Blase, he was scarcely able to perform the ceremonies special to the day;

namely, the blessing of throats. Again and again, however, he would rally his failing powers to exercise the sacred functions of his ministry, and on Feb. 10, he went far beyond his strength limit by giving a whole hour of instructions to his dear orphan boys at St. Michael's. The next morning, all protests to the contrary, he insisted upon offering Holy Mass. "What do you think, Reverend Mother?" he said. "On a day like this I must read Mass." It was the Feast of St. Ildephonse, that year celebrated on February 11, and in his earnest attempt to offer the Holy Sacrifice that day, he literally illustrated the words our Lord addressed on the eve of His passion to St. Peter: "The spirit indeed is willing but the flesh is weak," for Father Fitzpatrick, the hospital chaplain had to be summoned to assist him. Again on February 19, he made another, a final attempt, to ascend the Mount of Sacrifice, and again a priest had to be called to assist him — this time the Reverend J. A. Blashka.

"I fear that your old chaplain's days are now over," said Father Obermueller one day to Reverend Mother. "I see that I'm no longer useful to the community. You must ask the Bishop for another priest to relieve me."

"You know so well our needs, dear Father. For whom should I ask?" was the sad rejoinder.

"There is one," he replied — and here he mentioned a good priest's name. "But," he continued, "you must not ask for him; for, if God wills it, He will see that you get him. As far as I am concerned, if I have any influence when I reach the other side, I will see that you get the right one."

On May 27, Right Reverend Bishop Flasch, assisted by Reverend Charles Goldsmith and Reverend Edward Fitzpatrick, administered the Sacrament of Extreme

Unction to the failing chaplain, but the end was not yet; for, like another Simeon, he had one desire: he would see the chapel made a temple of the Most High by the solemn rite of consecration. He had been, indeed, the leading spirit in its erection, and his heart till the very last moment was in it.

June 10, the day of the consecration finally dawned, and despite his extreme weakness, he was all aglow with desire for the event. The previous night, as is customary, the Sisters kept the sacred watch before the relics destined for the altar, and during each hour recited the prescribed prayers. At five o'clock on that eventful morning Reverend F. Wuertz, accompanied by Reverend K. G. Beyer, brought the fast-failing priest Holy Communion, apparently as Viaticum.

The ceremonies of consecration, conducted by the Right Reverend K. C. Klasch, began at eight o'clock. During their course, the Most Reverend Archbishop Heiss walked to and fro in the adjoining corridor, and at intervals visited Father Obermueller to let him know how far the ceremonies had advanced. The latter had been promised that he would be brought to the chapel in time for the Pontifical Mass which began only at eleven. Three hours, therefore, the dying chaplain had to wait. They must have been a reminder of the God-Man's last three hours on Calvary. Indeed, the effort almost hastened his death; for Father Keller, who had visited him later on during the ceremonies, hurried to the chapel to inform the Most Reverend Archbishop and Reverend Mother that the decisive moment had come. In an instant they were at his bedside, lighted a blessed candle, and began the prayers for the dying. But it was not death that had stirred the spirit of the faithful priest. It was his intense desire to be present at that first Holy Mass offered

in the Chapel of Adoration and the fear that he might be deprived of this blessing, that had brought on the condition which Father Keller had interpreted as the chaplain's last agony. Again, therefore, the dying confessor was assured that he should not be forgotten when the time for the Holy Sacrifice drew near. He became calm in the assurance. Finally, the long three hours were over, the hour so ardently desired by him was at hand.

During the Holy Sacrifice, Father Obermueller was, doubtless, the most devout of the worshipers. The joy which flooded his soul was visible on his wasted features. At the elevation he raised his hands and tried to kneel, but was unable to do so. The Sacred Mysteries seemed to infuse new life into his feeble frame, for after his nurse had helped him back to bed and the Sisters had come to hear, as they thought, his "Nunc Dimittis," he addressed them spiritedly on the graces they had received. "Nunc dimittis!" it is true, he did exclaim, with a soul glowing with the sentiments of the aged prophet, for like him he had seen and adored the "Desired of Nations" not in human form, but under the still humbler veils of the Consecrated Host in a new temple, a chapel considerably more worthy of His Majesty than the first little shrine of adoration had been. Yes, Father Obermueller's "Nunc dimittis" was sincere and joyous, and he added: "To-day and to-morrow, and then — I am no more." But no shadow of fear dimmed the brightness of his joy throughout the remainder of that blessed day. When His Grace, Archbishop Heiss, entered the room he said, "So, Reverend Father, you have been in the chapel?" "Yes, I rode into it in a coach," he cheerily replied. For once, the invalid chair which had been procured for him served him in good stead. He had hitherto looked upon it as a com-

ALTAR OF SECOND CHAPEL OF ADORATION

fort not to be indulged in; but to-day it was not only tolerated but almost welcomed, because it had enabled him to carry out his last great desire. "Where is my new vehicle, Reverend Mother?" he asked when the time had come to go to the chapel; and it is scarcely necessary to state that without this convenience, he would not have been able to be present.

During the course of the day's address, which had been postponed until the afternoon, the Sisters were bathed in tears when the Most Reverend Archbishop referred to the dying chaplain who during the remainder of the day was frequently heard repeating: "The solemnity is over. I have now but one desire — to be dissolved and to be with Christ." When Reverend Mother asked if he could give his blessing for the last time to all the Sisters present and absent, he raised his hand, imparted the blessing, and then said to her, "Be not despondent, but trust in God. As far as I am concerned, I can do more for the Convent after my death than I have done during my life."

His prediction after returning from the chapel seems almost prophetical: "To-day, and to-morrow, and then I am no more." During the remainder of the day, he was animated and cheerful, but he failed rapidly on the "morrow," Friday, June 11. The rising sun of Pentecost Eve, June 12, found him still with the little flock he loved so well; but, before that sun had reached its zenith, his jeweled spirit had left the casket in which it had been enshrined a little over three-quarters of a century.

Just before Father Obermueller breathed his last, good Bishop Flasch, who had been with him almost constantly during his last hours, bent over his faithful priest, pronounced the general absolution, and in a loud voice spoke this last message to the departing

soul: "Father Obermueller, so often during life you have praised the Most Holy Sacrament. Now say once more with me, "Sanctus! Sanctus! Sanctus!" The eye of the dying priest kindled; his face brightened, manifesting his eagerness to comply with his bishop's inspiring exhortation; but the benumbed senses were unable to execute the spirit's last behest; the lips so often parted to pronounce benediction were sealed in death. It was 10:20 A. M., the eve of Pentecost, and Father Obermueller's soul had returned to its Creator, embellished by the merits of a long and truly holy life. On this same feast forty years previous, possibly at the very same hour, he had ascended the "high mountain apart," had been declared "a priest forever." Today, at St. Rose Convent,

"A shadow sleeps folded in vestments,
The dream of a smile on its face,
Of the joy of a spirit immortal,
Passed up to its God in His grace.
On the shadow of death there is flashing
The glory of noble deeds done;
On the face of the dead there is glowing
The light of a holy race run.
Still, shadow! sleep on in the vestment
Unstained by the priest who has gone."

The dear God knows how many prayers were offered by the members of the community for its first chaplain. Whether assembled in the sick room, in the community chapel, or before the Blessed Sacrament exposed in the Chapel of Adoration, the Convent Confessor was first and last in the Sisters' petitions, especially during the last days of his illness.

Most Reverend Archbishop Heiss arrived at the Convent on Pentecost Monday to be present at the obse-

REV. JOSEPH KRUSE

quies; and the following day after the Pontifical Requiem celebrated by Right Reverend K. C. Flasch, Father Obermueller's remains were interred in the chapel cemetery, whence they were later transferred to a vault in the chapel of the Catholic cemetery.

Reverend Joseph Kruse was appointed to succeed Father Obermueller. He entered upon his duties July 10, 1886, just one month after his worthy predecessor's death, and on the 26th of the following March was laid low by an apoplectic stroke from which he never thoroughly recovered. Reverend P. Geyer was summoned to anoint the stricken chaplain. On recovering consciousness, his first words were the last Father Obermueller probably heard on earth, "Sanctus, Sanctus, Sanctus!" Could it be that the echo of Bishop Flasch's clarion-toned "Sanctus," which seemed to recall for an instant Father Obermueller's spirit, still rang in Father Kruse's ears? Had he been present at the latter's deathbed, we might think so; as he was not, we leave the reader to explain as he will this singular coincidence.

Father Kruse lingered until Pentecost Sunday, May 29, bearing with edifying patience his trying illness. The following Tuesday, 1887, found St. Rose Convent in deep mourning as had, the same feast the year previous. The last solemn rites of Holy Mother Church were pronounced over the remains of Father Obermueller's successor, and they were interred in the Convent cemetery by the side of him whose vacant place he had tried to fill. Later they were transferred with those of Father Obermueller to the chapel of the Catholic Cemetery and both were placed in the very same vault.

Father Kruse had been professor for several years at St. Francis Seminary, hence, at his exequies that institution was represented by Reverend James Rainer, Reverend Carl Becker, and Reverend F. Reilly. The

Vicar General, Reverend James Schwebach, celebrated the Requiem Mass, Reverend Charles Goldsmith delivered the funeral sermon, and the Most Reverend Archbishop pronounced the absolution over the corpse.

During his brief period of chaplaincy at St. Rose, the deceased had won the esteem and confidence of the Sisters by his fatherly kindness and genuine piety; he had entered whole-heartedly into the community's undertakings, its joys and its sorrows. Sister Thaddea's premature death at the Odanah Indian Mission had touched him deeply. He offered a Requiem Mass for her repose, and preached a very inspiring sermon in which he extolled her unselfish devotion in offering herself to work "for the poorest of poor children." "God," he said, "did not wish to be her debtor, hence, He took her to Himself."

Reverend Joseph Kruse was born in Luechte, Germany, on the feast of the saint whose name he bore, March 19, 1846. He studied at the Boys' Seminary at Paderborn and later at the Philosophical and Theological Institute of the same city.

For some time after his ordination in 1869, he acted as Assistant to his uncle, Father Kruse at Bonnenburg, and suffered an imprisonment during the Kulturkampf for having read to his parishioners one of Bishop Conrad Martin's Pastorals.

During Father Kruse's last illness, his intimate friend and confrère, Father H. Reinhart, who had previously been procurator at St. Francis Seminary, acted as chaplain at St. Rose Convent. On September 1, 1887, he was recalled to the Seminary, and Right Reverend K. C. Flasch administered to the Sisters' spiritual needs until such time as a permanent chaplain would be appointed. In the meantime, as Father Obermueller had

REV. KILIAN G. BEYER

directed, the community was quite passive in the matter, praying earnestly, no doubt, for a worthy choice on the part of those in whose hands the appointment lay, but otherwise expressing no desire or anxiety. In fact, the Sisters considered themselves exceptionally fortunate in having their good Bishop as spiritual guide.

In the spring of 1888, however, the Most Reverend Archbishop Heiss wrote to Reverend Mother directing her very explicitly to ask Right Reverend Bishop Flasch for the appointment of a permanent chaplain; and in this, as usual, His Grace was very definite and decisive, expressly designating the priest he wished appointed, who, — convincing proof of God's special care of His confiding children — was no other than the one named by Father Obermueller, when asked whom he would recommend.

"But why," asked Right Reverend Bishop Flasch wonderingly of Mother Ludovica, "did you not tell me long ago of Father Obermueller's recommendation in this regard?"

"Because," was the simple rejoinder, "I was told not to."

Obedience to the Most Reverend Archbishop's directions in this matter, resulted in Reverend K. G. Beyer's entering upon the duties of chaplain on May 26, 1888.

Of our worthy Father Beyer, we need only say that his thirty-two years as director of the community have verified Father Obermueller's prediction: "God will see that you get the right chaplain." And though we fain would dwell here upon his manifold and arduous labors in behalf of our community, his extreme modesty forbids this, and we must, therefore, content ourselves with merely mentioning that for about fifteen years, in

addition to his duties at St. Rose Convent, Father Beyer rendered invaluable services to our Sisters as chaplain of St. Ann's and St. Michael's Orphan Homes and also of St. Francis Hospital.

Not only as a zealous spiritual director does he merit the Sisters' lasting gratitude but also as a prudent advisor in the community's temporal affairs. In the construction of our Chapel, Maria Angelorum, as likewise in the erection of other of our large buildings, his assistance and supervision have been invaluable.

MOST REV. MICHAEL HEISS, D. D.

CHAPTER XXII

A TRIBUTE TO OUR FOUNDER, MOST REVEREND MICHAEL HEISS

"His thoughts were as a pyramid up-piled
On whose far top an angel stood and smiled,
But in his heart he was a little child."

To the reader, who has followed even casually the events thus far described in this volume, the title of this chapter will occasion no surprise; neither will he expect any apology for its length; and, as for our Sisterhood, the older members would gladly enhance this chapter by the further addition of personal recollections, while the younger ones, we trust, may be assisted by these pages in forming a fair estimate of a charming, truly priestly character. His work in the sacred ministry was amazingly extensive, but we, the most favored children of his vast flock, as we look back with a holy joy on our past history, find interwoven in the very warp and woof of our early struggles and triumphs much of his saintly life. When in 1850, the waves of tribulation threatened to engulf the little bark just venturing upon the broad sea of the religious life, the noble form of Father Heiss appeared on the troubled waters; his strong right hand was laid upon the quivering vessel's rudder; and, as at the Master's powerful word on Galilee's Lake centuries ago, a great calm ensued.

Most Reverend Michael Heiss might justly be styled "An Apostle of the Northwest." Born April 12, 1818, at Pfahldorf, Bavaria, he completed his studies in the University of Munich at the early age of twenty-two, and was ordained to the priesthood by the future Car-

dinal Reisach on the 18th of October, 1840. Only two years after his ordination, having heard through Bishop Purcell of Cincinnati of the vast mission fields in far-off America, Father Heiss resolved to consecrate his life to this sublime cause. His Bishop having acquiesced in the young priest's commendable choice, Father Heiss embarked at Havre, Nov. 3, 1842, and after a dangerous and prolonged voyage of forty-five days, reached New York, Dec. 17. At Covington, Ky., he began his missionary career; but at the urgent request of Right Reverend J. M. Henni, he came to Milwaukee on May 3, 1844. Two years later he was instrumental in erecting the first brick-and-stone structure in that city — St. Mary's Church. In 1852, he was intrusted with the foundation of a seminary. At first Father Heiss instructed the candidates for the priesthood in the house of the four Brother Tertiaries spoken of in the early chapters of this work. Later the seminary found its permanent place in the Salesianum, and Reverend M. Heiss became the first rector and spiritual father of that institution of learning, which has sent forth into the Master's vineyard so many zealous young priests.

When in 1868, our own city of La Crosse became an Episcopal See, Father Heiss was chosen its first Bishop. To La Crosse, therefore, Right Reverend Bishop Heiss came shortly after. Can we imagine the episcopal palace awaiting him here in those early sixties? It was a rude, frame building; and his cathedral was scarcely better; but the changes wrought during his twelve years' administration are evidences of his untiring activity. This activity, however, was not limited to his diocese. Even as a priest he had taken part in the Council of Baltimore in 1849, in that of St. Louis in 1855, and again at Baltimore in 1866. After his con-

secration as Bishop he was appointed a member of the Committee on Dogmatic Questions at the Vatican Council, 1869-1870.

Bishop Henni took pleasure in relating the following incident concerning his intimate friend and co-laborer, Bishop Heiss. "Naturally during the long hours of our journey across the Atlantic, we American Bishops held frequent discussions on the great question to be decided by the Council, — The Infallibility of the Pope. Personally I was not convinced; and a number of the other Bishops shared my opinion. Knowing that Bishop Heiss was a man of profound erudition, I found an early opportunity of learning his views on the subject. Need I say that in less than an hour I was changed from a sceptic to a firm believer? Henceforth, when the question was broached by any of the Bishops, I referred them to Bishop Heiss, and in each case the result coincided with my own experience. Bishop Heiss' reasons were so clear and convincing that they satisfied the most questioning mind.

"It is easy, therefore, to understand," continued Bishop Henni, "why he, although the youngest Bishop at the Council, was so highly honored by the Pope. Most of the Archbishops and Bishops arrived at the Vatican Palace in carriages; some of them walked, however, hence, they were not present when the first arrivals were received by His Holiness, Pius IX. After greeting the assembled prelates cordially, His Holiness surprised his audience by asking, 'Where is my youngest son, Michael Heiss?'

"At that very moment, the Right Reverend Michael Heiss could be seen, satchel in hand, wending his way toward the Vatican. When he arrived there, the Holy Father descended from his throne to meet him, and, as the astonished Bishop knelt to kiss the feet of

Christ's Vicar, the latter graciously raised his youngest son and pressed him to his bosom."

In 1881, Right Reverend M. Heiss succeeded the Most Reverend J. M. Henni in the Archiepiscopal See of Milwaukee which he found burdened with a heavy debt. He immediately called a meeting of the diocesan clergy and in conjunction with them formulated a plan of liquidation, he himself and his Vicar General offering to donate their entire salaries until the full amount should be paid. When only six years later the Metropolitan See of Milwaukee could truthfully assert its absolute freedom from debt, this fact was a striking proof of the great Archbishop's business and executive ability. Nor was it for him a matter for mere self-gratification, but rather, the lifting of a real burden from his shoulders. The Scriptural injunction: "Owe no man anything," had for him the force of a commandment; and it is due partly, at least, to his precept and example in this regard that our community has always followed the laudable custom of not spending its pennies before earning them; in other words, of never contracting a debt unless the funds for its payment are actually on hand, or, at least, in sight.

In 1883, Pope Leo XIII summoned all the Archbishops of the United States to Rome to take part in the consultations and arrangements preparatory to the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore. Our good Archbishop responded promptly to the call as the following letter will show.

Roma, Campo Santo del Tedeschi,
Feast of the Immaculate Conception, 1883.

Venerable Mother Superior:

On this feast of the Immaculate Mother, I am kept waiting quite long before I can celebrate Holy Mass.

From this letter you see that I am still at Rome, and I do not know how long my sojourn here will last. Apparently, I shall

not leave before Christmas. Bishop Flasch has his mind set on going to Jerusalem, although everyone is endeavoring to dissuade him. He thinks, however, he must risk his life in order to be able to pray in the Holy Sepulchre. We have tried to comply with your wish. The Monsignor to whom such requests as the Apostolic approval of the Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament are referred was of the opinion that it is not customary to extend such approval — but he thought that indulgences could be granted, whereby the "Adoration" would be indirectly approved. Bishop Flasch thereupon handed in a written request for the gaining of indulgences in the Adoration Chapel; also a petition for the Sisters to receive Holy Communion during midnight Mass on Christmas. We have received no answer yet.

We both feel well so far, but the Roman diet does not agree with me; I am growing thinner, which suits me perfectly. As soon as I can settle all my affairs here, I am off for Germany again, where I intend to stay until the middle of February, because at that time the voyage across the sea is more favorable. In Germany I shall have to repeat my visits, particularly in convents, where I shall be welcomed most cordially on account of the Papal Benediction which I am to bring to the religious, who will be thus encouraged to pray most fervently for me in return. The prayers of so many pious souls, I am convinced, will not be in vain. I am very confident that the Sisters in La Crosse, especially during the Hours of Adoration, are praying most earnestly for me. I feel this is very necessary; for, while exteriorly all seems well with me, my soul is oppressed by a weight of care and anxiety. The hour in which I must render an account to God is drawing nearer and nearer. A bishop has much to answer for. How shall I fare? This question lies deeply engraven in my heart. My life's sun is setting and I have not accomplished all that God expects of me. It is this that afflicts my soul.

We, the American Archbishops and Bishops, receive the Holy Father's and Cardinals' kindest attentions; they treat us with great deference, and laud our loyalty toward the Holy Sea. In June, probably, a great Council will take place in Baltimore. Our trip to Rome will be a source of blessing to the Church of America.

But now I must close. Give my kind regards to all the venerable Sisters. And please, how are my Sisters, Beatrice and Juliana? Since I left La Crosse I am never cared for, or at-

tended to, so well. Again many thanks to all; and my daily prayer is that the dear Sisters may advance in perfection; for everything is vanity except to serve God and love Him above all. United in the love of Jesus and Mary,

Your devoted Father,

M. HEISS, Abp. Mil.

P. S.—Extend my greetings to Reverend Fathers Obermueller, Schwebach, Fitzpatrick, Wiedmann, and Mr. Jos. Leinfelder.

Somewhat later Right Reverend Bishop Flasch wrote our Reverend Mother that the Archbishop was ill at a seminary in Eichstaedt, Bavaria, where His Grace had studied. His Lordship stated also that if the Archbishop's health permitted they would sail, possibly on Feb. 29, or March 7, from Glasgow, Scotland, for the United States.

His Grace's illness occasioned much anxiety not only in the community but also throughout the entire Archdiocese. All felt that should he die or be unable to attend the coming Council of Baltimore, it would mean a great loss to the Church in America. It was, therefore, a great relief to those burdened with the government of the Church in our country when the Archbishop rallied, made the homeward voyage safely in company with Right Reverend K. Flasch, and gave every evidence that he would be able to take an active part in the Third Plenary Council of Baltimore.

Right Reverend Bishop Flasch reached La Crosse, April 1, 1884; he visited the Convent on the 2d, gave the Sisters an account of his travels, and imparted to them the Apostolic Benediction. He also brought documents authorizing the grant of a plenary indulgence in the Adoration Chapel on four days of the year.

Shortly after the opening of the Third Plenary Council the Archbishop wrote as follows:

Baltimore, Md., Nov. 12, 1884.

Venerable Mother Superior:

Here I am, — unable to do anything; for on the day of the solemn opening of the Council, yea, when the procession began, I had a severe attack of rheumatism, so it was with very great difficulty that I took part in the festivities, which lasted until almost 3:30 P. M. According to assignment, I had to deliver a sermon in the evening in St. Alphonsus Church. Since then, I have been able to celebrate Holy Mass though only with great difficulty, for I have been scarcely able to walk and have had to remain at home, while the other Bishops have really more work than they can do. I expected to be out to-day, but must have patience and refrain from all activity.

My lodging is near St. Alphonsus Church, in the Convent of the Redemptorists, where I am well cared for.

Last Sunday I made the acquaintance of Bishop Cosgrove of Davenport, and warmly I recommended to him the Sisters of La Crosse. I trust that the dear Sisters will strive in every way by fidelity to their vocation to make themselves worthy of this recommendation. Come what may, we must, even though we give offence thereby, live in accordance with our Rule. While we meet the priests with great respect and deference, and try to comply with their wishes, our conduct should be regulated by our holy Rule, lest while striving to please men, we incur the displeasure of God.

The thought often occurs to me how happy, even upon earth, the Sisters must be who keep the rules conscientiously and perform their various duties for the love of God — who patiently endure their little hardships and crosses and keep themselves in close union with their Lord. Am I mistaken when I class with these all our Sisters of La Crosse? Let us always render thanks to God for having so graciously preserved, so abundantly increased, and blessed our community. Morever, let each Sister individually strive to become more perfect.

Through the great blessing of the Perpetual Adoration the bond of love must ever unite all hearts more intimately with the Heart of Jesus and among themselves. This, of course, means courage and fortitude, but we "can do all things in Him who strengthens us!"

The Council will last at least three weeks, that is, until the first Sunday in Advent, perhaps even longer. Let all the Sisters,

especially those who take part in the Adoration, pray that everything may be blessed with good results.

The young Professed Sisters, Novices, and Postulants must apply themselves diligently to study, in order that they may be able to do great good among Christ's "little ones." In future the younger Sisters in particular will be required to pass a strict examination before an Episcopal Board of Examiners or a Diocesan School Board. I should deeply regret if my Sisters in La Crosse should fail in these examinations. To become faithful Religious must always be the first aim of the Sisters, but for the love of God and the children, they must also exert themselves to become efficient teachers.

After the Council, on my return home, it will be my pleasure to visit the Motherhouse in La Crosse. We have Pontifical High Mass every Sunday and Thursday, while the sessions last. Thursday, the 20th, will be my turn to celebrate, and on Nov. 27th, I am to deliver an address in Latin on the "The Dignity of the Priesthood."

Give to all the Sisters at home and on the missions my greetings and blessing. Tell them that I am placing all my trust in their prayers and all the good works they, by the grace of God, may perform. Confiding each and all to the Sacred Hearts of Jesus and Mary, I beg to remain

Your devoted Servant in Christ,

MICHAEL HEISS, Abp. of Mil.

After the High Mass referred to in the Archbishop's letter, the Baltimore press stated that the Hierarchy of the United States had unanimously agreed that Archbishop Heiss' tenor voice was the most remarkable and solemn in that notable assembly; while "The learning that Archbishop Heiss evinced at this meetting," says the author of "The Catholic Church in Wisconsin," "astonished even those who knew him well and appreciated his ability."

One of the enactments of the Third Plenary Council was that its decrees should be promulgated through Provincial Councils. Accordingly, Archbishop Heiss,

in 1886, prepared and forwarded to the Bishops and other ecclesiastics concerned a letter, urging attendance at such a Council to be held in Milwaukee during the last week of May. His Grace presided over this large gathering from its opening on May 23 to its close May 30. Indeed, we feel safe in saying that he was the very soul of that impressive assembly, the proceedings of which would fill a few volumes.

It is not to our purpose, however, to go into details concerning Milwaukee's First Provincial Council, but its great importance naturally gives it at least a passing notice in this chapter, since it was the last great work of the zealous Archbishop.

It is comparatively easy to form a just appreciation of His Grace's relations with the community and especially of the deep interest he evinced in matters apparently trifling, when we consider the weighty affairs that constantly engaged his attention. Our retreats he conducted in person until he had found in the Right Reverend K. C. Flasch a man patterned after his own heart.

It was his delight in the community's early days, and even after he had become Bishop, to practice with the novices and postulants the sacred chant connected with the ceremonies of Reception and Profession. As long as he resided in La Crosse, he would visit the Convent whenever the Sisters had learned a new Mass, and if he did not have time to listen to all the parts, he would at least remain throughout the Credo to hear the "Incarnatus est," which he considered the gem of that sacred composition.

After Mother Antonia's death, he thoroughly acquainted himself with the financial standing of the community, and attended in person to the details of its legal incorporation. Like St. Francis of Sales, who

wished his dear Visitation Nuns to be distinguished by sweetness, modesty, and mortification of the heart rather than by the use of hair-cloth, discipline, and other corporal austerities, our great Archbishop said, "Begin with the head. When you have become so perfect that you can humbly and joyfully embrace the various little sacrifices with which the religious life is replete — then, and then only, may you ask for the discipline." With him it was the ***spirit,*** the ***motive,*** not the ***act*** that counted, hence, in 1868, he forbade certain practices which the six original founders had considered essential to the religious life. His Grace insisted above all, in season and out of season, on the strict observance of the Rule. This he frequently referred to, in the language of the saints and in perfect accord with the teaching of the Church, as "the easiest way to attain sanctity and eternal life."

Instances of his devotion to our community might be multiplied indefinitely. A most dignified prelate he was, and yet how humbly condescending! "The greater the man the more graciously he stoops." His God descended to a manger! We can easily understand, therefore, how readily the great Archbishop could, like another St. Paul, "become all things to all that he might gain all for Christ."

Our great founder's devotion to our Seraphic Father St. Francis led him, in 1883, to become a member of the Third Order under the name of Brother Francis Seraphicus. But it is not our purpose to dwell here upon the spirit of deep-seated piety and exact fidelity to duty which characterized our beloved Archbishop. His very letters, for example, a few of which find place in this volume, breathe forth a fragrance that lends a charm to these simple pages. In these letters we note also his keen realization of the great responsibility which, as

Archbishop of a large and growing Metropolitan See, was his. Even as a young priest he took his duties very seriously as the following shows: "Where is Father Heiss?" said Bishop Henni on a certain occasion to one of our Sisters.

"He is at Jefferson making a retreat," was the reply.

"My God!" ejaculated the Bishop. "That man is making retreats all his life."

Late in the year 1889, Dec. 23, our good Archbishop came to St. Francis Hospital at La Crosse to recuperate, as he thought, his failing health; in reality to die in the bosom of the community which owed to him, after God, its very existence. On Feb. 23, he offered the Holy Sacrifice for the last time, and on March 2, he could only assist thereat; for his illness now took on a decidedly serious character and this was his last visit to the chapel.

From the eighth of March until the twenty-sixth, the day of his death, he endured great suffering which he sanctified by holy resignation and perfect patience. No word of complaint escaped his lips, but as his sufferings increased he redoubled his ejaculations to the Heavenly Father, the Sacred Heart of Jesus, Our Blessed Mother, the saints and angels, especially his own great patron, the Archangel St. Michael. He had a great devotion to Blessed Crescentia of Kaufbeuren; and, at times, he would call upon Father Obermueller, Mother Antonia, and all our departed Sisters to intercede for him.

About two weeks before his death he requested our Reverend Mother to see that Bishop Flasch would be in attendance when the decisive hour arrived. His Lordship, who had been spending the greater part of the day with his suffering prelate, now passed his

nights also in the Hospital, retiring to rest in a room just across the corridor from the Archbishop's.

On the Feast of St. Gabriel, our dying prelate expressed a desire to see all the Sisters for the last time. Accordingly, the Sisters from the Convent and Orphan Homes repaired in groups to the Hospital. To each group he addressed a few words freighted with zeal, piety, and solicitude. To one group he said, "Sisters, you have been my joy and consolation. Remain true to your holy vocation. Keep the Rule conscientiously, for then the blessing of God will never be wanting to you. I would very much like to stay among you longer, but the hours of my life are numbered. By a miracle, perhaps, my life might be prolonged, but we sinful creatures have no right to expect miracles. God's holy will be done. Pray to the Blessed Mother for me. Good bye, and may we meet in heaven."

With streaming eyes and suppressed sobs, the Sisters passed out. When the next group appeared, he addressed them thus: "I thank the Sisters from my heart for the love and kindness with which they remember me before the Blessed Sacrament." On being told that the Sisters offered all their prayers during the hours of Adoration for him, he said, "I hope God will reward them in return, particularly in the future life."

To the third group he said, "All will soon be over with me. I am glad the Sisters have such a good Father Confessor. Respect him that he may remain a long time with you. Keep your rules, strive daily after perfection, then we shall meet in heaven. This is all I wish to say. Farewell!"

The Feast of the Annunciation held a special attraction for him, and he often regretted that it was no

longer a holy day of obligation. On this Feast he had hoped to die, but God had decreed otherwise.

On the following day, shortly after night had wrapped our earth in sombre mantle, the dying prelate called for a light. Sister Matilda quickly turned on an electric light. In the full possession of his faculties, His Grace then said, "No, no — the blessed candle." Sister Matilda slipped from the room, but returned instantly with Reverend Mother and Sister Rose; and it was now the privilege of those present to witness a most solemn and inspiring death scene.

Right Reverend Bishop Flasch describes it thus: "Bishop Katzer of Green Bay was here, and just across the corridor from the Archbishop's room, we were discussing the funeral arrangements. Suddenly Father Koetting who had been attending the dying prelate called me to the sick chamber. The Most Reverend Archbishop raised himself and said: 'Fratres, bene attendite: hora mea proxima est.' 'Brethren, consider well: my hour is at hand.' The blessed candle had been lighted, as he had ordered. He held it himself and asked me to recite the prayers for the dying. I prayed loudly as far as 'Proficiscere, anima Christiana,' — 'Depart, Christian soul' — when I paused and cast an inquiring glance upon Bishop Katzer. During this pause the Archbishop said, 'Now Holy Communion.' 'Do you wish me to bring to you the Holy Viaticum?' I asked. 'Yes,' was the unhesitating reply. I brought him the Most Holy Sacrament which he received with great devotion. A few minutes later he sat erect, supported by Rev. K. G. Beyer and Rev. J. H. Koetting, and it was evident to all that he suffered greatly. Shortly after we had concluded the prayers for the dying, he laid back his head and expired peacefully."

Thus passed into the Great Beyond one who during

well-nigh a half century had been the guide and protector of our community and a loving father to all the members. For days after his death, editors, especially throughout the Northwest, irrespective of race or creed, vied with one another in paying homage to the virtues of the illustrious dead. Pages of the daily press filled with glowing tributes to our departed Founder are preserved in our community, and from these we might easily glean interesting matter for several more chapters. We trust, however, sufficient has been said in these pages to reveal in years to come the true character of one whose deeds merit that his memory should be kept green and his name held in benediction as long as our community exists.

To the Seminary, which he had helped to found and with whose interests his life was so closely linked, was accorded the privilege of paying the last honors to our beloved dead. He was buried beneath the shadow of the walls he had helped to raise. Funeral services, however, among the most solemn ever witnessed, were held over his remains also in St. Joseph's Cathedral, La Crosse, and a few days later, in St. John's Cathedral, Milwaukee.

That his love for, and interest in our Sisterhood was generally known may be inferred from the special reference made to it in Bishop Hennessey's sermon delivered at the Cathedral in Milwaukee:

"And you, Little Sisters of St. Francis, whom I see here, the most distressed and desolate of all the orphans this blow has made, who can interpret your grief? You, whom he has gathered together, organized into a community, directed, moulded, trained in the way of perfection, you, who were all his own, special objects of his love, his joy and his crown, to whom he went in sickness, in whose home he would lay down his

burden, from whose presence he would have his spirit go direct to the throne of God, while you, grief-stricken at his departure, knelt, wept, and prayed around his couch, — how dear your Father and friend was to you, your scalding tears are truthfully telling. Let them flow freely, let them moisten your cheeks and sanctify your garments; they are precious in the sight of God and man; they bear witness of virtues, human and divine; they do honor to our nature; they indicate strength, not weakness. If they are said to be womanly, it is because they are more than manly. They are the tribute of generous and grateful hearts to undoubted worth. The angels will gather them and carry them home, and in the sight of God they will be forgotten never."

Among the community's cherished remembrances of the great Archbishop is his ring, pectoral cross and chain which he placed in Reverend Mother's hand shortly before his death, saying, "Take this and keep it as a souvenir." More precious still, however, is a reliquary presented by him and containing among other precious relics a particle of the True Cross.

In addition to these highly-prized mementos he has, moreover, bequeathed to our community something which, if less tangible is, we know, not less real. This heritage is his own spirit, especially conspicuous in the lives of our older members to whom and through whom "his counsel continueth as a fountain of life;" for,

> "Night falls not on his labors; there will be
> His inspiration when long years have gone.
> Unceasing as the fountain's onward flow,
> Unending as the waters of the sea,
> For all eternity his work goes on."

CHAPTER XXIII

RIGHT REVEREND K. C. FLASCH, SECOND BISHOP OF LA CROSSE

Every material structure of any importance must have a deep foundation and strong supports. After God, our community may be said to have rested upon several individuals who, because of their piety, energy, far-sightedness, and indomitable will, may be likened to adamantine pillars. At least three of these are now quite familiar to our readers. This chapter will acquaint them still further with a fourth noble friend, the venerated second Bishop of La Crosse.

He was born in Bavaria, July 9, 1831, of pious parents who had the happiness of seeing four of their children consecrated to God. Three of their daughters became members of the Notre Dame Community in Milwaukee some years after the family's arrival in American in 1847; while the future bishop, Kilian C. Flasch, entered Notre Dame University, Ind., some years later. He left this now famous seat of learning only to become a student in St. Francis Seminary upon the opening of that institution in 1856. Ordained to the priesthood on Dec. 16, 1859, he was at once assigned to missionary work, but ten months later he was recalled to St. Francis, where he labored as master of discipline and professor until failing health obliged him to seek rest. From previous pages of this volume we know, that it was on account of this, that he repaired in 1865 to St. Coletta Convent, Jefferson, where

RIGHT REV. KILIAN C. FLASCH, D. D.

he was at once tutor and chaplain of our infant community.

On his return to the Seminary, he was again assigned to active duty. Later on he was placed in charge of St. Mary's Congregation at Elm Grove, but in 1875, he was recalled to St. Francis to fill the chair of moral theology, and in 1879, he became rector of that institution. This office he filled until consecrated Bishop of La Crosse on August 24, 1881, by the Right Reverend M. Heiss who had been previously appointed coadjutor to Archbishop Henni of Milwaukee. As Bishop of La Crosse, his interest in our community naturally increased. Besides taking the Archbishop's place in conducting the Sisters' retreats, he even acted as chaplain of the community for the greater part of a year.

Never of robust constitution, his health declined rapidly during the summer and fall of 1890, and it was thought that a change of climate would prove beneficial. On March 13, 1891, the Sisters of St. Rose were happily surprised during the midday repast by the good Bishop's sudden appearance in the refectory. Their joy, however, was changed to sorrow when they understood that His Lordship was about to depart for Chatawa, Miss. He consoled the Sisters in his fatherly way, saying to them, "You have our Lord with you."

"Yes," Reverend Mother replied, "but our Lord left His Church a visible head."

To this the gentle Bishop could make no reply. His heart was too full for words. His nephew, the Convent chaplain, Reverend K. G. Beyer, was about to accompany him South, and His Lordship realized that the community felt orphaned indeed. Arrived at Milwaukee, our two travelers repaired to the Notre Dame Convent where His Lordship rested for a short time and visited his sisters, Sisters Laurentia and Kiliana, the

latter being permitted by her superior, the Venerable Mother Caroline, to accompany her brother, the suffering prelate, as nurse.

For a time, His Lordship seemed materially benefited by the genial southern climate. He ate and slept better, and it seemed as though he might recover perfectly. But the exact nature of his malady was not then known. Somewhat later it was quite evident that he was suffering from that dreaded disease which still baffles the most eminent physicians' skill — cancer of the stomach.

Realizing that his days were numbered, His Lordship expressed a desire to die at home. Whereupon Sister Kiliana telegraphed Father Beyer, on May 28, to this effect, and the latter immediately departed for Chatawa. On his arrival there, he found our good Bishop so low that it was feared he could not stand the homeward journey. Indeed, on reaching Milwaukee, he appeared to be in a dying condition, and was immediately conveyed to the Notre Dame Convent. Here he rallied again, and Father Beyer returned to La Crosse leaving the Bishop to gain, through rest and the tender care of his Sisters in Milwaukee, strength for the remainder of the trip.

On June 7, the Very Reverend James Schwebach, then Vicar General, who had gone to Milwaukee expressly to accompany the Bishop on this last sad journey, arrived in La Crosse with His Lordship whose earthly travels were now ended and whose journey into eternity was close at hand.

With admirable sweetness and unfailing patience, our beloved Bishop now bore for two more long months the suffering peculiar to his special disease. On the morning of Aug. 3, just about the time the bells of the city rang out their oft-repeated reminder of one of our

holy Faith's sweetest mysteries — the Incarnation, Right Reverend K. C. Flasch passed into eternity, into a blessed eternity we have every reason to assume. Time and again during his illness he had said, "Sisters, do not think when I have gone that I went straight to Heaven, and so leave me burning in Purgatory. Pray for me!" Since with God there is no past nor future but a never-ending present, we may confidently hope that the almost incessant prayer of the Sisterhood in behalf of its suffering Bishop during his long illness won for him not only the grace to atone most efficaciously for those human frailties from which not even God's greatest servants were exempt, but also to acquire a magnificent reward by bearing with sublime patience his great sufferings.

On the day immediately preceding his death, the Feast of the Portiuncula, a veritable harvest of prayers must have been garnered by the Guardian Angels at St. Rose Convent, and on every golden sheaf might be seen emblazoned: "For our suffering Bishop, Right Reverend K. C. Flasch." The prayers of the orphan children, too, must have echoed through heaven's highest vault; and this is particularly true of the girls, even of the youngest ones; for, in addition to his regular visits to the Girls' Home, the good Bishop had always crossed its playground on his frequent calls at the hospital; and, though he possessed no magic flute as did that famous piper of Hamelin, no sooner had he set foot on St. Anne's grounds than

> "Little hands were clapping and little tongues chattering
> And, like fowls in a farm-yard when barley is scattering,
> Out came the children running."

At last these little ones looked in vain for the reappearance of that well beloved form. They were told he

was enduring great suffering which, by their prayers, they must help him to bear. Who will doubt that the appeals of these children now obtained comfort and help for him who had been their friend and father? Who that knows a child's heart will question that these children did pray? And when they came to look upon that familiar face cold in death, while His Lordship's remains lay in state in his residence (Aug. 3d-9th), who will say that their grief, if shorter lived than that of their elders, was not as deep and as genuinely sincere?

Concerning the obsequies of our beloved Bishop, a paper of that day contained the following item:

"BISHOP FLASCH IS LAID TO REST

"The saintly Bishop of La Crosse, the beloved of his people, and dutiful servant of God has been laid to rest. His Lordship departed this life on the third inst. After lying in state at the Episcopal residence during the week, his remains were removed to the Cathedral on Sunday afternoon at half past one o'clock, where services were held by the clergy present. The body was accompanied from the Bishop's house to the church by all the Catholic societies and a great concourse of people and priests. The Cathedral was draped in black. The church was crowded with devoted members of the Bishop's home parish throughout the night, and many priests sat by the coffin. On Monday morning a Requiem Mass was celebrated by the Very Reverend Father Schwebach assisted by the Reverend Ambrose Murphy and Reverend Alphonse Joerres. All day long, crowds of people filled the cathedral, many having come a great distance. Monday night the number of clergy in attendance was very great; prayers were constantly said, and the litanies chanted for the repose of the soul of the dead prelate. On Tuesday morning a solemn Requiem Mass was celebrated, at the close of which Father Abbelen pronounced a beautiful and pathetic eulogy in the German tongue. He dwelt upon the life history of the dead prelate in most touching words, recounted his early struggles,

and the labors he underwent in perfoming the duties essential to the diocese, the small number of souls connected with the church when Bishop Flasch took charge of the La Crosse diocese, and the great increase in wealth and population which has since taken place.

"Bishop Cotter of Winona spoke in English and dwelt upon the duties of a Christian Bishop, and the labors and sufferings of the early Fathers. He, too, paid a high compliment to the gentleness of heart and modest bearing of the deceased, as well as his firmness in performing the tasks imposed upon him by his office.

"After the ceremonies, a procession formed before the church; and, amid the prayers of the faithful, the body was borne to the Catholic cemetery, the line of march being on Main to Fourth street, then to State, and east to Sixth, south to Cass, east to Seventh, south to Market street, and then east to the cemetery. The remains are entombed only temporarily, it being the design to place them eventually in the new chapel vault about to be erected in the near future.

"The number of priests in attendance was so great that it would be impossible to mention them all. At least one hundred and fifty were present from the state of Wisconsin. There were, besides, many from Iowa and other states. Bishop Hennessey of Dubuque, Archbishop Ireland, Bishop Vertin of Marquette, Bishop Richter of Michigan, Bishop Ryan of Springfield, and Bishop Janssen of Belleville, Ill., all took part in the Requiem Mass."

The notable detours of the funeral cortege were made, no doubt, for a purpose. In consequence of these, the remains of our beloved Bishop were borne past two places very dear during life to the heart of the deceased — St. Mary's Church and St. Rose Convent. And it is almost superfluous to state here that the exterior drapings of both of these edifices were indicative of the feelings of the occupants. For, considering Father Flasch's activities in regard to our community

during its infancy at Jefferson, and his subsequent interest in it later as Bishop of La Crosse, we may justly consider him a co-founder. There is little doubt that the great Archbishop Heiss regarded him in this light, for when he departed for his Archiepiscopal See of Milwaukee, without a shadow of fear for its future, he intrusted to Bishop Flasch the guidance of our growing community. Then, too, apart from the profound esteem in which the deceased prelate was held by every member of our Sisterhood, and the deep grief his demise consequently occasioned, there was a general conviction among the older members that the last ecclesiastic who perfectly knew and thoroughly appreciated the community's past had been taken from them.

CHAPTER XXIV

APPROBATION OF THE RULE

Seven months elapsed between the demise of Bishop Flasch and the consecration of his worthy successor, our present beloved and esteemed Bishop, Right Reverend James Schwebach. Throughout the fatal illness of Bishop Flasch, the thought that we were soon to be fatherless was a source of bitter anxiety, and from the sad hour of his death on, as long as the See of La Crosse remained vacant, that same harrowing thought bore itself into the minds of the Sisters with painful insistence. As yet our congregation was only a diocesan institution. Even as such, it was a great blessing to its members, as well as to all who shared the fruits of its various good works; but the fact that it was only diocesan made the feeling of insecurity assert itself especially whenever death or some other circumstance occasioned a change in the Episcopal See. The death of Archbishop Heiss followed in so short a time by that of Bishop Flasch, had apparently removed the community's strongest supports.

It is true, the community had been affiliated to the whole Order of Minor Conventuals in 1870 by the following approbation:

"We, Father Ludovicus Marangoni of Padua, Doctor of Arts and Sacred Theology, The Minister General CIII. after the Seraphic Patriarch, of the whole Order of the Minor Conventuals of St. Francis.

"Since the Right Reverend and Illustrious Michael Heiss, Bishop of La Crosse, has made known to us that a Congregation

of Sisters, established by himself twelve years ago, belonging to the Third Order of St. Francis, is thus far satisfactorily prospering, so that, for its greater security and prosperity it deserves to be approved and supported by Our authority, We, therefore, induced by the pious request of the above named Right Reverend and Illustrious Bishop, as well as of said Sisters themselves, ordain and declare the following to be valid for the future:

"1. By the authority which We possess as Minister General of the whole Order of the Minor Conventuals of St. Francis, We, by these presents acknowledge and canonically erect and confirm the Congregation of the Third Order in the Diocese of La Crosse, the object of which is, that the Sisters, while striving diligently after Christian perfection of life, under the simple vows of Obedience, Poverty, and Chastity, also devote themselves to pious work, whether in schools or in orphanages and hospitals, observing the Rule of Blessed Father St. Francis, and the Statutes regarding the religious and community life composed, and to them adapted, by the Most Reverend Bishop of La Crosse.

"2. We will, that the Motherhouse (Domus principalis) of this Congregation with the Novitiate under the title and invocation of St. Rose of Viterbo be erected and continue to exist in the Episcopal City of La Crosse, in the State of Wisconsin.

"3. The Office of Rector and Visitor of said Congregation We confer upon the Right Reverend and Illustrious Michael Heiss, Bishop of La Crosse, empowering him to invest, either by himself or by a Representative, the Sisters with the habit of the Third Order of St. Francis for the Novitiate, and after the space of one year to admit them to the profession of simple vows with all the privileges, indulgences, and graces which the Sisters of the Third Order possess and enjoy in Our Whole Order.

"4. Removing all doubt regarding the celebrated Portiuncula Indulgence, We declare that this Indulgence was granted likewise for all churches of the Third Order of St. Francis, by Pope Clement X, October 3d, 1670, and that consequently all the faithful who visit said churches from the first Vespers of the Feast of the Dedication of the Basilica of Holy Mary of the Angels

until sunset of the next day, namely the second of August, can gain that Indulgence.

"5. In order that the Sisters may maintain an unbroken union with Our Order and the requisite dependence on the Superiors of the same Order, and the obedience due them, We will and command that they (the Sisters) be subject to the Visitation of the Minister General or his Commissary in the United States of America, and that they, moreover, acknowledge the Minister General for the time being, as their lawful Superior, and also promise in making their Religious Profession, humbly to obey his commands, if any may have been deemed necessary, otherwise all that has been granted them by these presents would be without force and validity.

"In testimony whereof, etc.

"Given in Rome from the Church of the XII Apostles, March 14, 1870.

"L. S.

"FR. LUDOVICUS MARANGONI,
"Minister General.

"FR. THOMAS LOGUENZI,
"Secretary General."

This document, though of great importance in its time, now inspired very little security. True, it had conferred spiritual favors highly prized by the community, but apart from this, we knew not just what relations existed between our congregation and the Superiors of the Minor Conventuals. Indeed, the community had been guided in its ordinary affairs all these years solely by the Rule given it by Right Reverend Bishop Heiss and, in special circumstances, by His Lordship personally. Not a single instance was on record of direction or supervision through the Minister General of the Order of Minor Conventuals, hence, what did his supervision really mean? No wonder that, one day when the subject was under discussion, Sister

Xavier Keller, who, since the days of Mother Antonia had acted as secretary to the Mother General, said, "Reverend Mother, we are always vowing obedience to the Minister General; let us write him. His reply may throw some light on what this obedience really means." The suggestion seemed timely, and was put into effect some months previous to the death of our beloved Bishop Flasch. In reply, May 4, 1890, the Commissary General of the Minor Conventuals in the United States, Syracuse, N. Y., wrote to this effect: "If spirits do communicate, this must be a case in point; for just about the time you were writing your letter I was thinking of your community, for which, in virtue of my office, I was responsible, yet concerning which I knew practically nothing except that it existed."

At last we were in touch with a representative of the Order of Minor Conventuals to which we had been affiliated for twenty years. His name mattered little, his office was everything, but for convenience in future references, it is with pleasure we recall the name of Father Francis Neubauer, O.M.C., who promised to visit us as soon as his duties would permit. The expected visit did not take place, however, and no further correspondence of importance was received from him until 1893.

Because of Bishop Flasch's illness, the ceremonies of Profession and Reception had been conducted in the summer of 1891 by the Vicar General, Very Reverend James Schwebach; in 1892 and 1893, however, the latter presided over these sacred ceremonies as our Bishop; but in 1894 his first visit to Rome prevented his doing so. Knowing in advance that this would be the case, Reverend Mother asked his Lordship's advice about inviting our newly-found representative of the

VERY REV. FRANCIS NEUBAUER, O. M. C.

Minor Conventuals, Father Francis, to conduct the annual retreats and also the ceremonies of Reception and Profession for that year.

"He is the man," replied our good Bishop, and forthwith an invitation was extended which ultimately brought to St. Rose a representative of the whole Order of the Minor Conventuals, the result of whose visit was given in a document which reads as follows:

Dearly Beloved Sisters:

It has been my desire and wish for years to appear among you of whose existence I certainly was aware, but to approach whom no cause was given, until it pleased God, to bring us together for the present year's holy retreat and subsequent canonical visitation.

The result of this twofold work, which has fully occupied me among you for the last three weeks, is certainly of that kind which deserves well-merited acknowledgment — your humble piety and most religious attitude, permitting, I am fully convinced, the holy exercises of the retreat to become as so many fountains of divine blessing within you. We judge the tree, as our Blessed Savior advises, by its fruit; and rarely do we err, for "A good tree bringeth forth good fruit," and, hence, my hope and my unshaken confidence that neither the planting nor irrigating of your humble little vineyard of St. Francis, through the saintly hands of your founders, will be in vain, since God Himself has blessed this work and the labor and sweat of those who knew no other rule of life than sacrifice.

The blessing of God will not be wanting even if storms and tempests arise; for God permits those whom He loves to be tried, and their conduct in these trials will plainly show whether they are able or not to drink with Him of His bitter chalice. Continue faithful to your God and to your rule, and you need not fear.

As far as I could judge from your manifestations throughout the process of the canonical visitation, with few exceptions

scarcely worth mentioning, I have noted with great satisfaction and I herewith give you credit for strict discipline in your Houses and Missions after the exemplary norm of your Motherhouse; for your respectful and childlike obedience; for the entire absence of any abuse of poverty; for a character and bearing, which might, perhaps, be considered by those less familiar with the true spirit of a religious, as stiff and independent, but which, nevertheless, stands the test, and places your Community among the number of those solid Religious Congregations which are characterized by strict adherence to their sacred vows, rules, and discipline, and whose peculiar distinction is: "A spirit of their own."

With particular pleasure, do I mention here the universal satisfaction with, and the confidence placed in the temporal and spiritual management of your congregation by those whom, according to your Holy Rule, you should and do reverence as your Superiors.

I cannot find even the least reason for any serious alarm, as long as the Sisters strive to maintain and to improve their present good disposition and spirit. It is natural that trials will come; yea, they must come, to make the strong still stronger, to prove virtue and to prepare and perfect it for its final crown. Not all children born of the same father and mother reach their majority, much less a ripe old age, neither can it reasonably be expected that all who have proposed to become children of St. Francis, will attain their end. Not all will persevere; some will not complete their Novitiate, others will not persevere through the period of their first vows, and still others will not be faithful through the second period of their vows; not all who come have a true vocation; and, hence, that only sixteen, since the opening of your Motherhouse at La Crosse, were either dismissed or left for reasons best known to themselves, is a compliment to your Community and calls on you anew to render your humble thanks to God, who shielded and protected you against unworthy intruders, whose worldly views and uncontrolled self-love have caused them either to be dismissed, or have made it impossible for them to remain with you to share to the end your labors, trials, and sacrifices and receive with you the final reward. Their weakness is a wholesome lesson to you to guard yourselves diligently by prayer against any motive contrary to the holy

will of God and out of keeping with the true spirit of our Seraphic Father St. Francis.

The little mustard seed planted by your zealous founders has grown to be a mighty tree; your number has increased marvelously; you are no longer the little sapling you were. With the growth of the Community, your religious works, naturally, have multiplied, the burdens increased, and the responsibilities become more serious. The moment, which your worthy and holy founders — God bless their memory — had foreseen, has come, when a wise and prudent alteration should do justice to the inevitable claims of the times, and distribute these burdens and responsibilities proportionally on the shoulders of the Reverend Mother and other capable assistants. In other points, too, it seems to me that the time has come either to modify or define more clearly and distinctly the nature and the limits of usages and practices until now in vogue, and this seems no less necessary for the common good of the Order than for the satisfaction of the consciences of those particularly concerned. These are points, which I cannot mention specifically here and which are otherwise subject to the knowledge and approbation of the Right Reverend Bishop of the diocese, to whom I will be most happy, as a humble son of St. Francis, to submit the necessary suggestions as conveniently after his return from Rome as the duties of his office may permit.

"Do not fear, little flock, because it has pleased your father to give you a kingdom." (Luke Chap. 12). You have your Protector with you, our Lord in the Perpetual Adoration, who bids you: "Come to Me all you who labor and are burdened and I will refresh you." He will be your strength, your comfort, your victory and your crown.

In the inscrutable designs of His Providence it has pleased God to remove from you by death the most Reverend Archbishop Heiss and Right Reverend Bishop Flasch, the Reverend Fathers Obermueller and Kruse; also your own dear and ever memorable Mother Antonia, besides thirty-five members of the Community. The works and sacrifices of these are recorded in the book of life; for the repose of their souls let us pray!

And now remembering that many of us here may soon have to render an account to God, "Let us," dear Sisters, to use the

words of our dying Father St. Francis, "commence to do good."

Lastly, I thank you all most sincerely for your kindness and charity, and beg you to remember me in your earnest prayers. It is needless to say that on my part, though duty requires that I do not forget you in my supplications, my recent personal experience among you has made this duty a holy and enduring pleasure. With the love of a father and the solicitude of a superior, I hereby bestow upon you all the Seraphic Benediction.

Given at St. Rose de Viterbo, La Crosse, July 26, 1894.

FR. FRANCIS M. NEUBAUER, O.M.C.,
Com. General.

On July 26, 1894, at the close of a happy retreat, which he had conducted, Father Francis, the Commissary General, read to the whole community assembled in the chapel the foregoing document. As he laid the precious paper on the table at which he was seated in the sanctuary, the face of our retreat master wore a smile of complete satisfaction. With joyous, grateful hearts we listened to

HIS CLOSING REMARKS

"Now, my dear children, ere I depart for my home, a few remarks by way of explanation may not be out of place here on the document which I have just read and which shall this day (July 26, 1894) be delivered into the hands of your Reverend Mother.

"The very gratifying experiences I have had here with you, are such as to inspire me with esteem and love for my dear children in the West. It shall always be my great pleasure when absent to dwell in spirit with you. As far as I can see by my own close observation, I have found that the convent in general and its spirit, as well as your individual good dispositions are certainly very praiseworthy. If God maintains the true religious spirit which I am thoroughly convinced exists in your community, I say a thousand times, 'Happy family!' I do not wish to stir up any pride in you by my remarks; for, next to God, you owe most

of the good you have produced to your virtuous founder Archbishop Heiss of blessed memory.

"As to difficulties which have arisen and may still arise, you need not be alarmed. To know that within twenty-five years no more than sixteen have become unfaithful to God and to their vows is most consoling. In the little family of Jesus Christ was there not also a Judas? It cannot be otherwise. If a mother raises nine or ten children, they will not all remain with her. Some are carried away by disease, others leave, and, perhaps, but three or four are spared her. Is it not better to cut off a sore finger than to lose the whole hand and, perhaps, the whole body? You have no need, therefore, to be alarmed.

"Before God, the Almighty, before Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament, I attest that the right spirit reigns here. I beg you to persevere in the conscientious way in which, at present, you discharge your various duties and obey your superiors. You will stand as long as you remain true, obedient, and submissive to your superiors. Let their will be your will. I give you credit for the filial love and affection you manifest towards them. You will find that those are always good and happy religious who are in sympathy with their superiors, while those who are not so, are, on the contrary, dissatisfied and the cause of much trouble. I hope there is not one here who would disregard the will of her superiors; for to do so, would be foolhardy, since it would be to disregard God Himself.

"I have seen your work, have noted your untiring zeal, and I assure you that all has been to me most edifying. This good spirit is not, however, the result of your own efforts alone. It has developed in the channels of grace which the mercy of God has opened for you. The very source of these channels, their fountain head is — **Holy Obedience.**

"As long as you remain solidly united, you will stand, as long as you remain obedient you will be united; but if different factions are formed in a community, then the whole must go to pieces. As long as there is only one head, all must stand, but when five or six heads arise there will soon be factions and there will be 'a house divided against itself,' and evidently all must fall together. 'Father, let them be one as we are one,' was the touching prayer of Christ at the Last Supper. No one can

overcome you if God is with you and you are with God in obedience.

"You have had special blessings so far; the wonderful hand of God has been resting visibly upon you. Suppose you had a poor foundation from the very beginning — that you had not always rendered perfect obedience or had lacked that good spirit in which your founder took such pains to ground you? In this case, evidently, you would not share the blessings you now enjoy.

"God will continue to shower blessings upon you if you continue to strive after perfection. Let us consider ourselves as nothing before God — his humble servants. It is as I told you during retreat. God has not chosen the wise and learned to preach the Gospel, but the little, the obedient, the simple of heart, the insignificant. Rejoice, therefore, and be happy, my dear children.

"What will our lives mean as good religious? Like bright rays of the sun dispelling the gloom and the shades of the forest, thus must we be among the wicked in the world. Since we are children of St. Francis, our lives should be modeled upon that of Christ's. Let us be humble; let us never make anything of ourselves; never push ourselves forward; ever be faithful in discharging our duties, no matter how little or insignificant the charge seems, and great will be our reward.

"What else shall I say? Be charitable to the poor. If they rap at your door, take them in and help them. Send none away. Bear with one another in charity. Be full of affection for one another. Remember that all your Sisters bear God's image within them. If we pray for the sinners, how much more affection ought we to show towards our fellow-sisters. If we cannot correct the faults of our companions by kind words and exhortations, let us fall on our knees in supplication for them. Be obliging to one another. In all your intercourse let charity and gentleness prevail. Let not a single day pass without offering some prayers for the welfare of your superiors.

"If you love one another imitate St. Francis, who when dying, asked for bread, which he distributed to his brethren, teaching them thereby, in the very last act of his life, brotherly love.

"You seem to be like little children, who do not trouble themselves about what they shall eat or drink, or who will take

care of them; this all rests upon the shoulders of your good Mother. Well done, my dear children, but consider the heavy burdens and great charges imposed upon your superiors. Retain and withhold from them all unnecessary complaints, for they have not taken the vow to do penance for your sins; no, this you must do yourselves. Do not, therefore, grieve their kind hearts.

"I shall pray for your spiritual and temporal welfare, and thank God that he has given you able guides; and, in turn, I earnestly commend to your prayers not myself alone, but also the vast family of Minor Conventuals which I represent. I shall be amply rewarded if, in a single soul here, a good thought that I may have suggested shall bring forth good fruit.

"Now kneel down, dear Sisters, and as is customary in the Franciscan Order after every canonical visitation, I shall give you the General Absolution."

If the words of Father Francis sound good to all of us at this date, to those who had been charged with the responsibility of directing the community during a considerable part of its formative years they must have been especially consoling. For, after all, a word of encouragement in season here leads us to look beyond with greater confidence and joyous expectancy to the Master's "Well done!"

Father Francis' approval inspired the heads of our community to seek with united effort the crowning of their work so far good, by the approbation of the Holy See, and for the attainment of which he had promised his assistance in fullest measure.

Before proceeding, however, to a somewhat detailed consideration of this matter, it seems opportune to recall here one of the minor changes suggested by Father Francis. This was the substitution of a round guimp for the square one designed by Mother Antonia in 1862, and in which she appears in this volume on page 41. A goodly part of the vacation of 1895 was, therefore, devoted to sewing; and, as a result, each Sister

left the Motherhouse for her respective mission with her religious dress slightly altered. No one regretted the change, however, since all felt it was decidedly for the better.

The matter of securing Apostolic Approbation may seem a comparatively easy one; but here, as in most cases, only those who have had actual experience know just what a work of this kind means. And while those who have exerted themselves to secure this blessing for our congregation labored only for God, and would, we know, be reluctant to sanction even the mention in these pages of their untiring efforts, some idea of the work done in this regard may be gleaned from the fact that nearly a quarter of a century was spent in attaining this object.

In this connection, however, along with the name of Father Francis Neubauer, two others have been expressly suggested as meriting the community's deepest gratitude and fervent prayers, — the Very Reverend Father Miller, Provincial of the Order of Minor Conventuals in the United States, now deceased, and the Very Reverend Dominic Reuter, ex-Minister General of the same Order. As secretary to Father Miller when the task of revising our Constitution was first begun, Father Reuter devoted his time and labor unsparingly to the cause.

Though called to Rome later where he was first made Procurator General of his Order and finally elected to the highest office, that of Minister General, he never lost sight of the welfare of our community. One might almost imagine Archbishop Heiss had returned in another form to secure for us the boon now craved. At Rome the Very Reverend Minister General

VERY REV. DOMINIC REUTER, O. M. C.

was our spokesman and mediator; in short, his services were such that the members of our Sisterhood will ever remember him in a special manner during their Hours of Adoration; and it will surely be a real pleasure for any of our Sisters not already acquainted with the fact to learn that during the recent war, their great benefactor was appointed by our Holy Father Benedict XV, to a very special post of honor, that of Secretary of the War Bureau for Missing Soldiers.

The following quotation from one of Very Reverend Father Reuter's letters is a tribute to the saintly Pius X, and, therefore, doubly interesting to us: "It was not so very difficult to obtain from Pius X, the Pope of the Eucharist, approbation for the Perpetual Adoration in the Motherhouse, once it was made clear to him that it could be done without detriment to the reverence due our Eucharistic King and without exacting too much from the Sisters; and of that I could assure him from personal observation. I remember well how I gave His Holiness an account of my visit to La Crosse and told him of my taking part in one of the processions in the Convent garden, when the Sisters carried the baldachin for the Blessed Sacrament."

And, now, a word about our own who have been working here for the good cause. While all the members of our Sisterhood have, by fervent prayer, contributed in no small degree, doubtless, towards securing the Papal Approbation, the burden of the actual work connected therewith has been silently and generously borne by our esteemed chaplain, Reverend K. G. Beyer, our beloved Mother General, M. Ludovica, and her worthy Assistant, Mother M. Seraphine.

Pending a revision of the rules, each Professed Sister's written consent was requested, and we may add,

readily granted. Some changes were now made and a revised copy forwarded to Rome. Sometime afterwards we received the Decree of Praise, the definite approbation of the community, and the approval for five years of the Constitutions.

DECREE OF PRAISE

The Sacred Congregation for Religious in a plenary conference held on February 4, 1910, having considered the recommendations of the Ordinaries, and after mature deliberation, without conflicting, as the Sacred Canons and Apostolic Constitutions provide, with the jurisdiction of the Ordinaries, has granted to the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis whose Motherhouse is in the city of La Crosse, the Decree of Praise, the final approbation of the Institute, and the temporary approbation for five years of the Constitutions, as the said Constitutions of the Sisters appear written in Latin in this authentic copy. Which act of the most Eminent Fathers His Holiness, Pope Pius X, has deigned to confirm in an audience granted for February 5, 1910, to the undersigned Secretary of the Sacred Congregation. All things to the contrary notwithstanding.

Given at Rome, at the office of the Secretary of the Sacred Congregation for Religious, February 28, 1910.

FR. J. C. CARD. VIVES,
Prefect.
D. L. JANNSENS, O.S.B.,
Secretray.

The first General Chapter met December 29, 1910, and the first election under the revised rule resulted in the re-election of Sister Ludovica Keller as Mother General, and in the election of Sister Seraphine Kraus as First Assistant, Sister Richarda Schoeberle as Second Assistant, Sister Matilda Lang as Third Assistant, Sister Dominica Urbany as Fourth Assistant, Sister Rosina Kaltefleiter as Secretary General, and Sister Leonina Haas as Treasurer General. Sister Innocentia

Wrocklage was appointed Superioress of the Motherhouse; and Sister Paula Meitinger, Mistress of Novices.

Application for the final approval after the usual five years' trial was prevented in 1915 by the World War. The petition was presented a year later, however, and the long-desired approbation for which so many fervent petitions had been sent heavenward, was granted.

DECREE OF APPROBATION

Our Holy Father, by Divine Providence Pope Benedict XV, in an audience given to the Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Religious on the twenty-eighth day of January, nineteen hundred and seventeen, in consideration of the letters of recommendation of the Bishops of the places where the members of the pious Institute of the Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis of the Perpetual Adoration are occupied, whose Motherhouse is in the diocese of La Crosse; and especially after having heard the opinion of the Most Eminent and Most Reverend Cardinals who preside over the above named Sacred Congregation, who, in a plenary conference held on the twenty-sixth day of this month, have carefully examined and considered the matter — has graciously deigned to approve and confirm the Constitutions of the aforesaid Institute as they are contained in this copy, the original of which is preserved in the archives of the Sacred Congregation. And by the tenor of the present Decree he does approve and confirm them, without prejudice, however, to the jurisdiction of the Ordinaries, according to the forms of the Sacred Canons and the Apostolic Constitutions.

Given at Rome, at the office of the Secretary of the Sacred Congregation of Religious, on the sixth day of March, nineteen hundred seventeen.

J. CARD. TONTI, Prefect,

(Seal) Bishop of Canopus, Sec.

Record of a parallel to this event — Apostolic Approbation — is found in the community's annals only

in the establishment of the Perpetual Adoration. If the latter may be said to be the crowning event in Mother Antonia's life, the former may as truly be considered the diamond setting in Mother Ludovica's golden administration. "Now we can go no higher," she said to the Sisters that vacation. "We are approved by the Church." It was saying all. There was security at last. The once frail bark of our community could now safely sail on with the approbation and under the guidance of Peter's Successor.

Hours of labor and anxiety are forgotten by our good Mother General; the long quarter of a century, spent in striving for what finally has become a reality, seems insignificant now, as she places before the Professed Religious assembled for their vacation at the Motherhouse in the summer of 1917, not merely a copy of the approved Rule, but the very copy which had been placed, so to speak, at the feet of Christ's Vicar on earth, and has come to us across the broad Atlantic palpitant, it would almost seem, with the benediction of His Holiness. Reverently, therefore, each Sister kisses this precious copy of Our Constitutions, firmly resolved to be most faithful in their observance.

Each Sister knows that a copy of her Rule, her own individual copy, the only book to which she is allowed a personal claim, will be placed in her lifeless hands, will descend with her into her last resting place, and if she has been faithful to its precepts, will plead her cause before the Throne of God. For, placed in a small protecting case, a copy of Our Constitutions is given to each Religious of our community, at her profession. This she is directed to keep ever close at hand, and further, to use it frequently as a book of meditation.

In each copy is placed a simple book mark on which is printed this short but excellent Eulogy of the Rule of St. Francis:

"Our Rule is for us
The book of life,
The hope of salvation,
The pledge of glory,
The essence of the gospel,
The royal road of the cross,
Perfection itself,
The key of heaven,
The bond of eternal union."

CHAPTER XXV

OUR SCHOOLS

The education of youth has been spoken of frequently throughout these pages, but to close this volume without a chapter dealing more or less exclusively with our schools might create a false impression in the minds of some not thoroughly familiar with our work as a Religious Community. On this subject, our holy Rule says: "This Congregation considers as one of its chief occupations the education and instruction of youth in the parochial schools in the country as well as in the city." Accordingly, the Sisterhood has conscientiously endeavored to fulfill this prescription by devoting its talents and best efforts to the worthy cause of education. Until very recent years, however, its educational endeavors have been almost entirely devoted to the worthy cause of elementary education. Here as elsewhere, Providence, doubtless, has directed its activities.

An incident may serve to illustrate fully this statement. Though Archbishop Heiss and Mother Antonia knew perfectly well that a rudimentary education was the crying need of their day, still, to satisfy those who held other views, as well as to prepare for the future, a special attempt to train teachers for high schools and academies was made in 1876; and Sparta, Wisconsin, was selected as a favorable site for an academy.

While Father Obermueller offered no objection to the project, he never tired of repeating that the Sisters' mission was to implant the Faith in the hearts of the

ST. ROSE CONVENT, NORTHWEST VIEW

little ones. "Without your work," he was wont to say in his instructions and sermons, "the missionary's efforts are useless. Catholic Faith in the nineteenth century will depend for its propagation on the Sisters engaged in the parochial schools of the country." And as the work on the new academy progressed, Mother Antonia must have entertained serious doubts as to whether the undertaking was really in accordance with the holy will of God. The La Crosse Diocese was poor in the extreme; consequently, though St. Michael's Orphan Home was scarcely large enough to accommodate the boys, it had to afford room also for the girls. "Would it not be more pleasing to God," Mother asked herself, "to offer the building in course of erection at Sparta to the Diocese for the use of the poor orphan girls?" She placed this question before the Sisters for consideration and they unanimously decided that the building intended for the academy be converted into an orphanage for the girls. By this time, the second story was nearing completion. Some of the more elaborate details of the original plan were now omitted, the building was hurriedly finished, and during the vacation of 1878 the orphan girls were transferred to Sparta and cared for there until the opening of St. Ann's Orphan Home at La Crosse in 1889. St. Patrick's Congregation at Sparta was also benefited by this arrangement. A class-room for the children of the parish was fitted out in the building and opened on Sept. 11, 1877, with our present Mother Assistant in charge.

Just what trend the opening of the proposed academy might have given our educational work we do not know. In regard to any material success which might have resulted from the early entrance of our community upon the work of higher education, the

visible blessing resting upon its labors in the field of elementary education would seem to exemplify these words of Holy Writ: "He that giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord and He will repay." In other words, our success might have been more apparent had we undertaken work in high schools and academies at that early date. But would it have been more fruitful for God and souls?

Nor did the training of teachers for the work of higher, or secondary, education suffer because of the sacrifice made for the orphans. At various times, men of learning were engaged as teachers at St. Rose. Professor Durward, who in earlier days had rendered invaluable aid to St. Francis Seminary by his generous services and had proven himself a loyal co-worker of Bishop Heiss, was employed as instructor at the Motherhouse as early as 1872 and taught among other subjects English, elocution, and painting. During the year 1877-1878 the Very Rev. H. Kampschroer, Vicar General of the La Crosse Diocese, conducted regular classes in English and German, Bookkeeping, Algebra, Geometry, and Astronomy.

Again, in 1892, the Sisters eagerly availed themselves of the advantages which study under an efficient and inspiring teacher affords. Mr. Durward's genius and talent were again at their disposal and they profited by them to the fullest extent. A large oil painting of our good Archbishop, Most Reverend M. Heiss, and one of His Lordship, Right Reverend K. C. Flasch, hanging to-day in one of the parlors are samples of some of the work done under his direction. The former was executed by our present Sister Clara, the latter by Sister Cecilia. These were among the first big attempts in our art department, which has since made long

strides towards the mount of the great masters.

Summer school sessions regularly held since 1870 have gone far towards imparting to our Sisters that uniformity which makes for efficiency in a teaching order. In later years, special instructors were secured for the summer months when it is possible for all the teaching Sisters to attend. Ever on the alert to note the changing conditions in the intellectual and educational world, our superiors have planned to make these gatherings "Normal" sessions in the fullest sense of the term. Here new methods have been discussed and their valuable features incorporated into our plan of studies. The benefits accruing to pupils through these sources must be considerable; hence, though the Sisters, like the lowly Teacher of Nazareth, have been most frequently employed on small missions and in country places, the thorough grade work done by the community as a unit can scarcely be considered a negligible factor in the field of secondary education. For here as elsewhere it is true that

> "Heaven is not reached by a single bound,
> But we build the ladder by which we rise
> From the lowly earth to the vaulted skies,
> And we mount that ladder round by round."

To-day when educational processes are progressing by leaps and bounds, — and in some instances just as truly retrogressing, — St. Rose Convent offers her prospective teachers a full Four-Year High School Course whose standards are acknowledged by the State University of Wisconsin to which it is accredited. The next step contemplated is the accrediting of her Normal Department. This must follow as a matter of course; and, since to-day the call for Catholic secondary schools

is insistent and imperative, and since it is precisely in the higher branches of learning that the greatest danger lies, it is probably only a question of time — God willing — when a regular College Course will be added. Yet whatever strides St. Rose Convent may make in things educational, it is her firm resolve out of love for, and in imitation of the Great Teacher, as well as through veneration for her worthy founders, to consider ***Parochial School Work*** of prime importance.

Since prominent educators are agreed that music is a study just as logical, scientific, and cultural as any of the branches taught in schools after the three R's, the study of music was early undertaken; for shortly after the establishment of our Motherhouse in La Crosse several resident musicians were engaged to teach the younger members both vocal and instrumental music. In 1889, Rev. Charles Becker, professor of music at St. Francis Seminary, conducted a course in Plain Chant, Psalmody, and Cecilian Music. Later a more extended course in Church Music and Harmony was given the Sister Organists by Professor J. Singenberger, also of St. Francis Seminary. Again in 1918, during our Summer Institute, Rev. Gregory Huegle, O.S.B., conducted a class in Gregorian Chant.

Some of our Music Teachers have in recent years studied violin under teachers who were pupils of famous European masters, while others have had the opportunity of receiving piano lessons from exponents of Leschetizsky, some of whom were his immediate pupils, others, pupils of Fanny Bloomfield Zeisler. At present our School of Music is affiliated to the Art Society, St. Louis; and some of its best teachers; Alexander Henneman, Le Roy Campbell, and Charles N.

HOLY TRINITY CONVENT

ST. CLARA CONVENT
LA CROSSE, WIS.

ST. JOSEPH CONVENT

Boyd, have conducted regular class work in music at St. Rose during several Summer Institutes.

Nearly all our Music Teachers, and some of their pupils likewise, now hold a diploma for theoretical work; and as soon as the Society offers diplomas for practical work, most of our Music Teachers will be prepared to pass the required test.

In accordance with our Mother General's earnest desire that music be systematically taught in our schools, the best music readers available were gradually introduced; but when the Progressive Music Series to which a Catholic Edition was added by Right Reverend J. Schrembs and Reverend Gregory Huegle, O.S.B., were published, nearly all of our schools adopted these readers.

While the community has not attempted to dabble in so-called vocational courses, our Mother General has strongly favored the training of girls for the home. This phase of our work takes us back to the building at Sparta, which, we may truly say, has had a most varied career. Opened as a Parochial School in September, 1877, a Girl's Home from 1878 to 1889, it can also boast of being our First Domestic Science School.

There, on September 1, 1904, our Domestic Science Course was instituted and, while the movement was at that time rather embryonic in the world at large, it will be remembered that the community's undertakings have all been stamped by very humble beginnings. Pupils were at first simply allowed to take "turns" in helping to prepare the meals. Sewing and other branches were also taught to the individual rather than to whole groups. Yet the fact that the teachers spent a goodly part of each night working out a definite program for the following day's work, goes far towards

showing that while the opening of St. Mary's Domestic Science School was clearly an experiment, system pervaded all that was attempted.

This tedious nightly planning after each long day of hard labor plainly showed the imperative necessity of a regular course; and Sister Dominica Urbany, to whom the work of opening the Domestic Science School had been intrusted, visited at the earliest opportunity some of the best training schools of the country — among these the Stout Institute at Menominie, Wisconsin. Later on, Sister Veridiana Wernimont and Sister Fridolina Timp, who assisted Sister Dominica, attended a summer session of that Institute. Knowing what to do was one thing, but having the necessary apparatus was another. The Stout Institute had all the equipment available at that day for the teaching of Home Economics, and St. Mary's had practically none. The Sisters' earnest endeavors were, nevertheless, evidently blessed by God, for pupils crowded in, and the building was remodeled, enlarged, and more properly equipped. By 1908, the capacity of the Institute was again taxed to its utmost, and as sufficient grounds could not be secured for a suitable campus, it was decided to make no further addition to the building but to seek a more desirable location elsewhere.

Just about this time earnest thinkers had begun to view with alarm the tendency of the present generation to look disdainfully upon domestic duties. The "homeless" conditions into which society is rapidly sinking must bring about a general awakening, and the wise and broad-minded are seeking earnestly some means of restoring the happy home life of their own childhood — that blessed home life so essential to the wel-

fare of Church and State. And these same thinkers are unanimous in declaring in favor of institutions that emphasize the importance of home life, and whose primary object is to impart to girls a scientific and practical knowledge of things domestic. Many a home, they argue, would be happier — a "home, sweet home," indeed, if the housewife had the proper knowledge and training.

Thus also reasoned Father Kuemper of Carroll, Iowa. He conferred with our good Bishop, Right Reverend James Schwebach, and with Reverend Mother in regard to the erection of such an institute in his city, at the same time pledging his own support in fullest measure to the undertaking. From what has been said, it can be taken for granted that our Mother General was very happy to co-operate with him in the good work, and as a first step in that direction, she sent Sister Fridolina and Sister Theophania to the Stout Institute for a regular course of training. While these Sisters were pursuing their studies, our second Domestic Training School, St. Angela's Institute, was being erected at Carroll, Iowa.

In the meantime, the people of Sparta learned that St. Mary's Domestic Science School was to be transferred, and they urgently requested the Sisters to fit out that Institute for hospital purposes. Excellent train service, water rich in mineral deposits, and other features of its location stamped Sparta as a most favorable site for a hospital; accordingly, when the Institute closed its last session in June, 1915, plans for remodeling the building and equipping it with hospital apparatus were well under way.

On Oct. 4, 1909, St. Angela's Institute opened with fourteen pupils in attendance. Since that date, over a

thousand have been enrolled. From the very beginning, no pains have been spared to make the Institute rank with the best schools of its kind in the country. Its primary object is the training of young girls for the life work of the majority; that is, the making of a true home. St. Angela's Institute offers its girls an opportunity to gain a thoroughly scientific and practical knowledge of domestic duties. Food study, home nursing, dietetics, home decorating are among the subjects it aims to teach most thoroughly. The day of "guess work" in the home is past; home-making has become a science, an art; and St. Angela's Institute aims to imbue its pupils with a love for, and a joy in this art similar to that which animates the connoisseur at work in the studio or contemplating a masterpiece in an art gallery. The years but increase the number of those who appreciate more highly and more fully this great privilege, and to-day students not only from the adjacent states but even from the remotest parts of the Union are enrolled at St. Angela's.

The curriculum of the Institute now includes a Commercial Course and a Four-Year High School Course. At first sight, this would seem to defeat the very end for which the institution was erected. On the contrary, it but widens its sphere of activity, since no matter what special course they may elect to follow, all pupils without exception are given special training in Home Economics; and thus many a girl, who by exclusive application to a Commercial or a High School Course would lose all love for, or remain in utter ignorance of the domestic art, is saved from this misfortune at St. Angela's.

That there exists to-day many a happy home in which a former pupil of the St. Angela's Institute reigns as mistress, is indeed consoling; for the home is

ST. JOHN ACADEMY,
COLFAX, WASH.

SACRED HEART CONVENT,
CARROLL, LOWA

ST. ANGELA INSTITUTE,
CARROLL, IOWA

the foundation of society, the bulwark of Church and State. That many of its pupils, too, have heard and answered the call to leave all and follow Christ by becoming members of our own or some other religious order is but another proof that

> "Our echoes roll from soul to soul
> And grow forever and forever."

and, that love of home, vocations to the religious life, and full intellectual development thrive side by side. The Institute is accredited to the Iowa State College at Ames, to the Iowa State Teachers' College at Cedar Falls, and to the University of Iowa at Iowa City.

Even were the good resulting from our Domestic Science School less apparent, we feel that our Mother General's devotion to the cause which prompted its establishment would lead her to extend the good work as rapidly as possible, and this is being done. About thirty acres of land have been purchased near Oak Grove Cemetery in La Crosse for a future Domestic Science School, and while the Sisters look forward with eagerness to the realization of a project, which it is hoped may be fruitful in blessings for the future, they admire the masterful mind whose plans for the good of her community harmonize so beautifully with zeal for the welfare of souls. The buildings are intended to serve another end. During the vacation months they can be used for the Sisters' Normal Sessions and Summer School work, such as is being actually done this year (1920) at St. Angela's. St. John's Academy, Colfax, Washington, is another place of reunion for our Sisters of the West. This institution, though opened only in September, 1915, has made rapid

strides in things educational and is affiliated to the Catholic University at Washington, D. C.

To appreciate properly this review of our history as a Teaching Order, we cast a retrospective glance upon the two little schools opened at Jefferson in 1864. At. St. John's Congregation the two Sisters taught in the church and the pupils squatted about on the floor or kneelers as best they could, using the church pews as desks and seats alternately. Though the St. Lawrence School also had two teachers, Sisters Agnes and Veronica, both taught in the same room in a small, rude building. The third school was at Cross Plains and here, too, the building was little more than a mere shed.

Our schools at present number seventy-seven; thirty-six of these are in the Diocese of La Crosse, the others are a part of the Great Catholic educational systems of the following dioceses: Superior, Sioux City, Davenport, Des Moines, Dubuque, Helena, Spokane, and Boise. For ten thousand pupils attending these schools and the three hundred forty Sisters of our community who are engaged in teaching these children, daily prayers are offered in each mission house of our Sisterhood, and at the Motherhouse not only is each Sister with her charges remembered especially in the daily community prayers, but special mementos are made for them during every hour of Adoration, both day and night.

No wonder that, as we close this chapter, one of those many wonderful scenes with which Holy Writ teems rises before our view, and we hasten to substitute the actors that we may bring home more quickly the lesson it would impart. On the plain, the broad field of education, we behold our Sisters actively engaged. From all sides we see followers of Amalec, emissaries of Satan, rushing into this field to wrest from Christ the

ST. JOSEPH CONVENT,
BELLEVUE, IOWA

ST. JOSEPH CONVENT,
MUSCATINE, IOWA

SACRED HEART CONVENT,
ASHLAND, WIS.

souls of children redeemed by His Precious Blood. Whence shall the teachers, the defenders of these little ones, derive strength for this combat? We raise our eyes to the Mount where hands are "lifted up," not only "until sunset" as were those of Moses for the Israelites who wrestled against Amalec and his followers, but through all the fleeting hours of the busy day, through all the long hours of the silent night. It is through these hands continually "lifted up" in our Eucharistic Watches on the Mount of our Perpetual Adoration that strength will flow to the teachers, the toilers down on the plain. Jesus, Eucharistic King, may we daily draw nearer to Thee that we may attract and preserve for Thee the souls of innumerable children.

CHAPTER XXVI

A TRIPLE CELEBRATION

How far that little light hath thrown its beam! Thus far, in these annals, we have traced the results of most earnest endeavors and upward toilings, omitting much of the detailed and frequently discouraging processes by which these results were attained. We have now reached the day of which Mother Antonia and her companions dreamed golden dreams; we have reached the day on which the solemn promise, made by this dear Mother of beloved memory, is to be redeemed.

It is the Feast of Portiuncula, Aug. 2, 1906. The Sisters, intent on gaining indulgences, are seen recollectedly passing in and out of the dear old chapel erected in 1874. This is the last time they will kneel within its sacred walls; for it has long since become too small for the ever growing community, and a new chapel, like an expectant bride, stands awaiting consecration. Though work on this splendid building was begun in the spring of 1901, it was only the following year that saw the completion of the basement; and not until May 24, 1902, was the corner stone of the edifice laid. Another four years were needed to complete the magnificent superstructure, and to-day all are agreed that our New Maria Angelorum more than exceeds the expectations of those five years of waiting.

Assembled to witness the grand and unusual ceremonies of consecration, were our own beloved Bishop of La Crosse, Right Reverend J. Schwebach; Right Reverend J. B. Cotter, Bishop of Winona; Right Reverend J. J. Fox, Bishop of Green Bay; Right Reverend

Mother Ludovica, Superioress of the Sisters of St. Francis of Perpetual Adoration of La Crosse, Wis., humbly prostrate at the feet of your Holiness, begs you to grant her and all the members of her community the Apostolic Benediction and Plenary Indulgence "in articulo mortis" in the usual form of the Church as prescribed by the Apostolic See.

ELEMOSINERIA APOSTOLICA

Sanctus Pontifex benigne annuit precibus
Ex Aedibus Vaticanis die 16 Maji anno 1906.
✠ D. M. Costantini Archiep. Sebast.

A. F. Schinner, Bishop of Superior; Right Reverend Monsignor Joseph Rainer, Rector of St. Francis Seminary; Right Reverend Monsignor A. Ph. Kremer, Vicar General of the Diocese of La Crosse; seventy Priests, and three hundred seventy of our Sisters.

At 6:30 A. M., Right Reverend J. Schwebach began the ceremonies which, ranking among the most beautiful in the Catholic liturgy, are at the same time venerable for their great antiquity as well as for their profound significance. The deacons assisting the bishop during the ceremonies were Rev. Conrad Flasch and Rev. Joseph Schillmoeller; the chanters, Rev. Peter Schnitzler and Rev. John Brudermanns; while our worthy chaplain, Rev. K. G. Beyer, acted as master of ceremonies. At the conclusion a Pontifical High Mass was celebrated by Right Reverend A. F. Schinner, the assistant deacons being the Reverend Fathers Michael Haas and Joseph Hagemann, and the deacons of honor, Very Rev. G. Heer and Rev. F. W. Pape. Right Reverend Monsignor A. Ph. Kremer acted as archdeacon.

The altar, a blaze of light, and the sanctuary, resplendent with costly vestments, recalled more by contrast than association that blessed scene of 1865, when Mother Antonia laid the little lard light at the feet of our loving Savior, the Guest — the Prisoner of Love, Who had taken up His abode in the little tabernacle at St. Coletta Convent, Jefferson.

> How far that light hath thrown its beams,
> What graces thence in silent streams
> To souls, His own, have flowed!

The little lard light still burns on, or rather, the sentiments which accompanied its offering still live, not

only in those who are privileged to recall that blessed scene but also in the younger members of our community, who "seeing the good works" of their older Sisters, must also "glorify their Father in Heaven."

After the Gospel of the Mass, a sermon in keeping with the dignity of the occasion was delivered by Right Reverend Monsignor Kremer. It was in part as follows:

" 'Ego vidi sanctam civitatem Jerusalem novam, descendentem de coelo a Deo, paratam, sicut sponsam ornatam viro suo.'

" 'And I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven, from God, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.' Apoc. XXI, 2.

"Right Reverend Bishops, Right Reverend Monsignor, Very Reverend and Reverend Fathers:

"The desire of a young man of the Jewish race to see the city of Jerusalem must have been great, and with the impetuous longing of youth he waited for the day when his parents were to take him along for the first time to the sacred walls of the holy city. The long and tedious journey would soon be forgotten, all the discomforts of weary travel were counted as nothing, because now the dream of his childhood was to be realized — he was to see the city of David; and when at last his anxious eye perceived in the far distance the towers of the city, the golden roof of the temple, overwhelming joy filled his heart, his steps became quicker, his desire greater, and onward he pressed till he reached the steps leading to the temple, when with overflowing heart he sang the song of his greatest king: 'Laetatus sum in his quae dicta sunt mihi, in domum Domini ibimus.'

"Jerusalem, the object of childhood's fancies, of manhood's pride, and of old age's recollections, was reached at last.

"A similar joy animates to-day the hearts of the Sisters of St. Francis who call this Convent their Motherhouse. Their desire to build a worthy sanctuary to their God has materialized at last, and has blossomed forth into this magnificent structure.

CHAPEL MARIA ANGELORUM, SOUTHWEST VIEW

MAIN ALTAR OF CHAPEL

Glad are the voices, therefore, that join on this day in the chorus which for long centuries has re-echoed to distant lands and over many seas: 'Laetatus sum * * *"

"The Church in the office of the dedication calls the new chapel 'the holy city, the new Jerusalem.'

"The holy city: holy is its government, holy are its laws, and holy its people. From His Eucharistic Throne rules the King of kings over this convent city, which is entirely His own. His representative is a successor of His chosen apostles, — the bishop of the diocese — and under the gentle guidance of this shepherd, the superiors govern according to God's own laws. Here the Master's voice reigns supreme; every rule is based on His holy law, and every regulation promotes the holiness of those who observe it. United by the common bond of love for their God and for each other, the Sisters have the ambition in common of becoming holy. This holiness is neither selfish nor barren. With eager eye, the Sisters trace the Savior's footsteps, and, lo, they are led to the sick and the suffering; the Sisters build their hospitals and smooth the pillow of pain; and, when human skill and human patience can relieve no more, divine charity whispers words of heavenly consolation and breathes forth a prayer to the Father above for the suffering and dying pilgrim. The Savior's steps lead to the highways and byways, to the cheerless and homeless, and behold, the Sisters open their motherly arms and receive the orphan in the name of Him who is a Father to the fatherless. The Savior's voice calls out: 'Suffer the little ones to come unto Me,' and the Sisters go forth, gather the little ones around them, and tell them of the sweet Savior and His beautiful Heaven. And with all this, the Savior in the tabernacle is never left alone; in the prayerful silence of this sacred city Sisters kneel, listen to the inspirations of their King; and out of their hearts the incense of prayer arises to heaven, like the fragrance of the virgin flowers on a summer night. On busy days and silent nights, the Sisters kneel and pray; when the world dances and the world laughs, the Sisters kneel and pray for God's thoughtless children; when the world moans and despairing weeps, the Sisters pray the prayer of hope and exultant expectation. This is the holy city, the new Jerusalem.

"In our midst has arisen another Jerusalem, a city of peace,

a city of sacrifice. Is it like the old? It is similar to the old, but immeasurably superior.

"These walls were not built by trembling slaves; no money was forced from unwilling hands for their completion, neither king's ransom, nor queen's dowry furnished their ornamentation. Only God knows the many, the great, the silent sacrifices the Sisters have brought to make this building possible. The Savior instituted the Holy Eucharist in a borrowed hall; this is all His own. The Sisters' cells are poor and bare to make the tabernacle of the Lord rich and costly; dark and plain is the habit of the daughters of St. Francis, but for Him, Who had nowhere to lay His head, these same poor Sisters have prepared a home of the best the world can afford.

"All other buildings on earth find their reason of existence either in the necessities of man, or in his love of wealth and pleasure. But the thought to erect this Sanctuary to the Lord took its origin in Heaven at the throne of God, for no earthly consideration could give it existence. From Heaven came the impulse of building it, of Heaven its vaulted arches remind us, heavenly scenes are painted on its walls, and up towards Heaven tend its pointed spires.

"Still, it was not merely the material structure of the Church which St. John saw when he penned the words of our text. He spoke of the living Church, of which we read in the matins of the dedication:

> "'City of God, Jerusalem,
> Vision of peace and of delight,
> Who, built of living stones art raised
> E'en to the starry heaven's height,
> And whom encircle as a bride
> A thousand, thousand angels bright.'

"Even so this building typifies the temple of the Lord, built of living stones — the hearts and the souls of the Sisters in this Convent. They have been chosen from out of a multitude of people to be the pride of the land; in the same manner, the building material was carefully selected, and each part of the building, each detail of its construction aptly typifies the Sister and her life-work. The foundation is hidden in the ground with-

out ornament and without hope of praise; the outside walls are exposed to wind and weather, the floors are laid to be trodden on; some parts are so designed as to reflect their beauty close to the tabernacle, whilst others perform their humble service in a remote corner. The sun smiles on the brightly colored pictures of the windows, whilst never a ray of light reaches the hidden supports of this immense canopy.

"Still, who will say that only the bright or only the strong are necessary? Is not each brick of importance? Is not each stone necessary to the strength, the durability, the symmetry, and the beauty of the building? Deface but one brick on that wall, and the whole surface seems disfigured; remove but one stone, and the whole structure suffers.

"Some Sisters rise to the height of power in the convent — the highest point of the chapel is a cross — and some remain in the common ranks; some must labor in the glare of the world, and some do their task unseen by all; some must shine like the glittering gold and some must remain hidden like the stones in the deep. But all, all are alike in this, they do their work for the same end, the glory of Him in whose honor these walls are built; each one is a dear spouse of Christ, and each one tries to the best of her ability to be a 'sponsa praeparata,' a bride prepared to meet her Lord, to become as nearly perfect in her appointed field as possible.

"All the beauty of the chapel has but one object: the glory of God; directly or indirectly, everything in it is there for that purpose, from the strength of the mighty pillars to the delicate harmonies of fresco and painting. 'Sponsa adornata viro suo.'

"The Sister develops her best abilities and spends her best endeavors but for One; she adorns herself to be beautiful in the eyes of but One; she looks not for self-satisfaction; she seeks not the approval of the world nor the praises of the crowds; her one and only ambition is to please Him who has become her heavenly Spouse, Jesus Christ, to Whom she has given her heart, her soul, her life, and her eternity. 'Sponsa ornata viro suo.'

"This then, is what the new chapel speaks to us in silent and solemn language. Happy are those who hear its voice and heed its words.

"And with the Church we apply to the chapel the wish of the Psalmist: 'Fiat pax in virtute tua et abundantia in turribus tuis.'

'Let peace be in thy strength and abundance in thy towers.' Peace in the hearts of all, peace in the community, peace in life and in death, with an abundance of the blessings God bestows upon His chosen ones. Amen."

The jubilation of the Sisters' hearts, filled with gratitude and love on this great day of grace which was to bring to their house such abundant blessings, overflowed into their hymns of praise chanted to their heavenly Bridegroom upon His entrance into their midst. With Solomon they might well exclaim: "Is it credible then that God should dwell with men on the earth? If heaven and the heaven of heavens do not contain Thee, how much less this house which I have built?"

But this day must be filled to the full with joy and blessings; there must yet be "the end of this perfect day." And its beautiful close will doubtless recall a similar scene a little more than twenty-five years ago. To-day, Silver Sheen and Golden Gleam intermingle; for the community exults in a Triple Celebration:

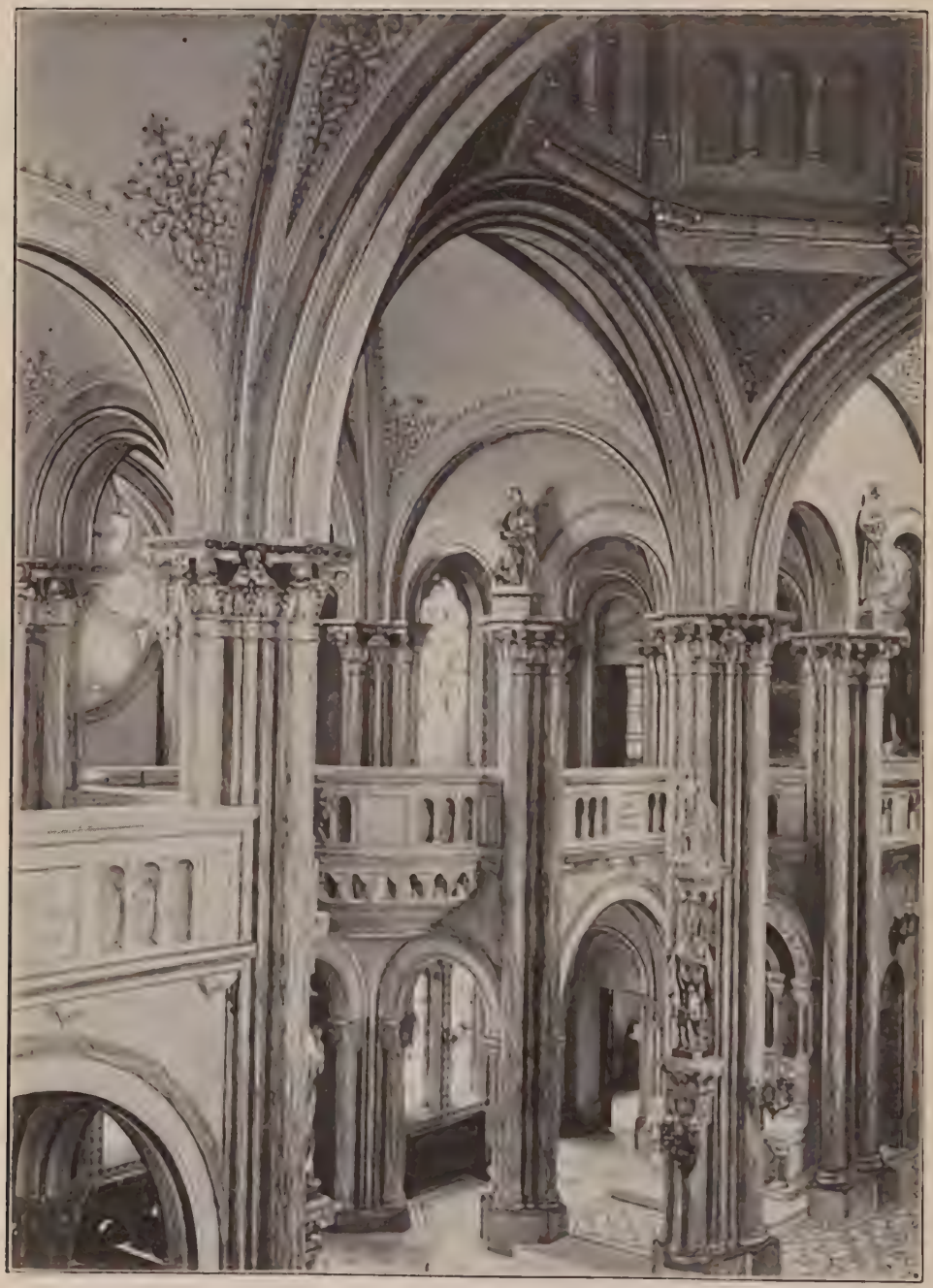
The Dedication of the New Maria Angelorum, just described;

The Silver Jubilee of the Establishment of the Perpetual Adoration;

The Golden Jubilee of the Foundation of the Community.

According to time, the celebration of the last two events should have occurred in 1903, but it was purposely deferred because the size of the old chapel would not permit a celebration worthy of the occasion. It would almost seem Providence had willed it thus that this day's glory might be full. To-day the clouds are

NAVE OF CHAPEL VIEWED FROM THE ALTAR



NORTH TRANSEPT OF CHAPEL

all "inside out;" the "silver linings," in full view; — the heavens a "sea of glory."

Promptly at 3:30 P. M. the Right Reverend Bishops, Monsignors, and attendant priests assemble in the Sanctuary of the old chapel, and, preceded by the cross-bearer and acolytes, they form for the solemn procession. The grand old hymn "Pange Lingua" is intoned, and amid the pealing of silvery chimes, the waving of silken banners, and jubilant choral song the procession starts. Out from the main entrance of the old chapel which had done service for so many years, step the cross-bearer and assistants, followed by the youthful postulants clad in white, next the young novices wearing wreaths. After these the choir follows, chanting hymns, those masterpieces of the Angelic Doctor: "Pange Lingua," "Lauda Sion," "Sacris Solemniis," etc., and the joyous cadence of that solemn chant, rising and falling on the breeze, announces to the surrounding world the culmination of the most notable event in the annals of the Community.

Pausing for a moment to view the procession as it moves along, the prophetic vision of the sainted exile of Patmos is brought to our mind, when, in his Apocalypse, he speaks of the 144,000 Virgins, who

> Follow the Lamb in garments white
> Wherever He may go,
> Singing that canticle of love
> Which none but virgins know.

Immediately behind the choir, are the Clergy, numbering about seventy, in cassock and surplice, bearing lighted tapers; next come the acolytes, some strewing flowers, and others bearing processional lanterns and banners, then the censer bearers; and under a canopy of white silk richly decorated with gold trap-

pings which is borne by four priests, Rev. J. Kaiser, Rev. M. Haas, Rev. J. Durch, Rev. H. Boeckmann, comes the Venerable Prelate of Winona, Right Reverend J. B. Cotter, bearing aloft the monstrance. He is accompanied by Right Reverend J. Schwebach, Rev. J. A. Barney, the deacon, and Rev. A. J. Nickl, the sub-deacon; while surrounding the Blessed Sacrament as guards of honor in their royal purple robes, are the remaining Bishops and Monsignors. Truly, an awe-inspiring, a grand, a solemn spectacle — one which could not fail to make a lasting impression on the heart of the spectator, be his faith what it may.

Next come the Venerable Mother and her Assistants, and between them, bearing in her aged hands a golden palm, a jubilarian of fifty years, Ven. Sister Bridget Nepper, the eldest daughter in this portion of the King's household, and the only survivor of the youthful band of virgins who, fifty years ago, in 1856, when the community was still in its infancy, consecrated themselves to the Lamb without spot. All her companions have been called Home, and she alone remains, like the aged Simeon awaiting with loving expectation the summons which will bid her spirit wing its flight to the bosom of God, for she has grown old in the service of her Lord, and her soul is filled with longing to be dissolved and be with Christ.

Following these is a long train of Sisters, who, in 1878, on the occasion of the solemn introduction into the community of the Perpetual Adoration made their final vows. They too, are jubilarians, and at the request of the Minister General of the Franciscan Order in Rome, His Holiness Pope Pius X has bestowed a special blessing on them on the occasion of their Silver

PROCESSION ENTERING THE CHAPEL

Jubilee as perpetually consecrated spouses of Jesus Christ in the Blessed Sacrament. They were fifty at the time, but the Lord of the vineyard in His wisdom saw fit to break their ranks and call some of their number to Himself, leaving thirty-five to celebrate on earth the jubilee which they, we trust, are now keeping in eternal bliss. These are followed by the remaining Sisters of the Convent, all bearing palms — palms of victory; for is not this the day which crowns their labors with success, which repays the loving sacrifices of years, which sees their anticipations realized beyond all expectations, the day to which they looked forward with such ardent longing? Truly, indeed, may we apply here the words: "Haec dies quam fecit Dominus."

Slowly and solemnly down the broad Convent walks, the procession moves on. And now the main entrance of "Maria Angelorum" is reached, above the massive bronze doors of which is the inscription: "Cum Deo, per Deum, ad Deum." Fitting motto, truly — the epitome of the life of every true religious!

At the main entrance, the canopy borne by the four priests, which had done service in the open air, is replaced by an umbrellina of white and gold silk; carried by a young student.

Entering the chapel, the grand cortége moves up the center aisle, while the mighty organ, having caught up the jubilant strains of the choir without, peals forth in majestic harmony its joyous welcome to the King of kings.

The strewing of flowers, the bright banners, the waving of palms, and the soul-inspiring choral chant vividly bring to our mind another similar scene enacted during the mortal life of the benign Son of David, and

related so beautifully in Holy Scripture; namely, His triumphal entry into the city of His love and care, the old Jerusalem; and unconsciously we find ourselves repeating the joyous acclamation: "Benedictus qui venit in nomine Domini."

The supreme moment has at length arrived. Jesus in the midst of His own, reposing on His throne of love, amid lights and flowers, is about to bestow His benediction.

Exultemus et laetemur, with o'erflowing hearts we sing;
Let our Jubilate Deo thro' the vaults of heaven ring;
Glad Te Deums now resounding penetrate the realms above,
While Laudate's joyous cadence mingles with the hymns of love.

Ah, who can portray at this solemn moment the feelings of those present, of those aged Sisters whose days have been spent in union with God (cum Deo); whose labors have been all performed for God and through God (per Deum); and whose aims have ever tended to God (ad Deum)? Surely, were Life's Vesper bell to chime for them at this moment, most gladly would they have chanted their "Nunc Dimittis" and gone forth rejoicing to meet the Bridegroom of their souls, for their hearts were replete with joy. The world and its votaries comprehend naught of this happiness, for only to those who have left all to follow Him does the Beloved reveal Himself in all His beauty.

In the sacred silence of that magnificent chapel, does the King of kings, the God of the Tabernacle, for the first time bestow His Eucharistic blessing.

And now, the monstrance being placed in position, the revolving tabernacle is slowly turned by the deacon until it greets the eyes of those faithful watchers in

INTERIOR OF CHAPEL OF ADORATION, SIDE VIEW

CHAPEL OF MARIA ANGELORUM, REAR VIEW

the Adoration Chapel proper, who with loving impatience await the gracious advent of their Sacramental Lord.

The last act in the drama of this memorable day's solemn service is ended, but the ***first hour of adoration*** in the chapel Maria Angelorum has just begun. Here, never more to leave the sacred precincts, does Jesus dwell, here

> 'Mid flowers and lights and incense
> Are fulfilled those words divine:
> "For behold, I am with you always
> Even to the end of time."

CHAPTER XXVII

OUT OF THE SHADOWS INTO THE LIGHT

In the foregoing chapters we have presented the main facts in the history of our Sisterhood. And now as we look back, we find only a tithe has been told. We seem to have been loitering in some lovely garden where blossomed flowers so abundantly and of such varied hues that we know not which to gather and, while we admire the handful we have culled, we are fully conscious there have been others unnoticed which were, perhaps, more fair.

> "Full many a flower is born to blush unseen
> And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

Just so it is in every community. What a beautiful page the life of each true religious would form in its history! Still, only a very limited number of names can be mentioned in a work of this kind. Then, too, how sweet, how tender, how consoling is the memory of those who have gone before! We have referred in these pages to a very few of our dear departed; yet beautiful, touching, and far more conducive to their happiness than anything we might record here are the practices observed in our community for its beloved dead.

Immediately after a Sister's demise, a card bearing her name is placed in the Adoration Chapel, and during an entire week she is prayed for every hour of the day and night. Scarcely has the soul left the body when Mary, the Refuge of Sinners, is invoked one hundred and fifty times in its behalf, the fifteen decades of the Rosary being recited as soon as possible. On each day

during the interval between the death and the burial of a member, the Way of the Cross is offered for the deceased, and the Rosary is daily recited for her during the ensuing week. Besides the Requiem Mass, three other Holy Masses are offered for every deceased Sister. Year after year, on the anniversary of her death, during each of its twenty-four hours, she is again remembered in a special manner in the prayers of the Adoration. Add to this the many Masses offered during the month of November for our dear departed ones, and the wealth of atonement for our deceased members is, indeed, most consoling.

Peaceful, edifying, consoling, too, and almost as varied as their personality are the deaths of our dear ones. One would have the glad "Magnificat" recited as she leaves this vale of tears; another, filled with the thought of God's infinite holiness, takes refuge in the "Miserere." After a few hours of illness, some are called in life's bright morning to their eternal reward; others, only after many a long day, many a weary night spent with their Spouse in Gethsemane. Theirs is a lingering illness during which, time and again, death knocks, departs, returns, and terrorizes. Yet, whether it be the sacrifice of a young life or the pains of a lingering death, after many fruitful years, which is demanded by the Master, all yield up their spirits peacefully, convinced that, having left all things to follow Christ, theirs must be, — for so runs His promise — "Life Everlasting."

Only a few months ago, January 8, 1920, we laid to rest the last of the ten whose names should ever be cherished. The death of Sister Aloysia Seidl seemed like the severing of one of the last links which bound us to our venerated past. Soon each and all of the dear Sisters who have borne the heat and burden of the day

in laying deep the foundation of our community shall have passed out of the shadows into the bright light of a day that knows no end. And as we recall the number of our Sisters who have departed this life since the erection of our Motherhouse in La Crosse, 1870, our beloved Mother General, M. Ludovica, appears to us as a majestic oak which has weathered a thousand storms. Called upon in 1875 to share, as Assistant, the government of the community, she was intrusted, on the death of Mother Antonia in 1882, with the entire burden of its management. Almost crushed by grief at the loss of her beloved superior and by the thought of the responsibility imposed by her election as Mother General, she turned for counsel and assistance first to God, then in turn to the wise and fatherly Archbishop Heiss, and the faithful, pious Father Obermueller. In 1886, the latter was called to receive the reward of his labors, and within a few months the next chaplain, Rev. J. Kruse, followed him. Four years later, 1890, the Archbishop himself passed out of earth's shadows. How keenly she felt the loss of these — God alone knows! By her side, however, as Assistant, was the devoted, self-sacrificing Sister Rose. Then, too, there was left her still the loyal and kind-hearted Bishop Flasch, and to these two she could turn for counsel and support.

But the measure of our Mother's grief was not yet full. Scarcely had another year rolled away when the gentle Bishop Flasch lay on his deathbed. Well did he realize how the community clung to him for guidance, and though he might be said to have come to Calvary's heights so great were his sufferings, yet like the Model on that Mount he forgot himself in remembering others. Turning one day to a picture of Our Lady of Good Counsel, — and his devotion to Mary

under this title was very great — he poured forth a most fervent prayer for our Mother General who was standing at his bedside. In touching words, he regretted that he was no longer able to direct the community, and he besought that best and most powerful of Mothers to supply his place, to be the special guide and counselor to the one to whom he had so often given counsel, Mother Ludovica.

Time and again, has the picture referred to recalled to our Mother General the Bishop's earnest prayer. It is an oil painting, well executed, and hangs in Mother's room, and together with His Lordship's pectoral cross and chain, forms a cherished remembrance of one of the truest friends God has ever given our Sisterhood, a friend not lost but gone before, to be our intercessor at the Great White Throne, whither many of those we loved in life have preceded us.

Thanks to the beautiful practices observed in our community for its beloved dead, our dear departed seem very near to us. The prayers offered to-day in the Adoration Chapel for those who left us fifty years ago seem to contradict the poet's statement:

"Few shall know we ever lived, a hundred years from now"

God grant that when centuries have been added to the years now past, the names of our dear ones may still be wafted heavenward from this Throne of Grace, — our Adoration Chapel. There remembrances are sacred, there they are of true worth, hence, we shall mention but two more of our departed Sisters here; — two who, in their day, were of invaluable assistance to the community and who made many a sacrifice in silence to lighten our Mother's burden.

In 1895, death removed from her side one very near and dear to her, Sister Xavier Keller. Sister Xavier had

borne more than her share of the burden during Mother Antonia's days, filling at one and the same time the office of secretary, procurator, and teacher. The experience thus gained rendered her services as secretary almost invaluable to our Mother General. Again in 1906, Sister Rose, her Assistant for twenty-eight years, was called to her eternal home. We who know this most amiable character can form some idea of what her death meant to our Mother.

And here we turn from our dear departed to her who during thirty-eight years has been charged with the government of the community, to our beloved Mother General, who has seen laid to rest, during these same years, one hundred and seven of those who had looked to her after our ever Blessed Lady for a mother's loving care and guidance, and we must conclude that much of Mother Ludovica's life has been spent under the shadow of the cross;—

For there ever is a shadow
E'en where brightest sun doth shine.
Who would reach the highest summit
Of the holy Mount of God
First must follow in the pathway
That His suffering Master trod;
Yea, as stars will shine the brighter
Set in deepest tint of blue,
So the heart that loves thro' suffering
Proves itself to be most true,
And the fairest, choicest virtues,
That withstand the storm of years
Take the deepest root and flourish
Best when moistened well with tears.

Yes, many are the good things which follow in the wake of suffering; it is necessary not only to prove virtue but also to deepen character; it broadens the in-

dividual's view of life, warms the sympathies. And our merciful God Who has showered so many favors upon our community, has given us also a real mother in our present loved and revered Mother Ludovica.

Forgetting self in the matter, we might almost say that our interest in her personal happiness could not permit us to wish that the pathway of her life might have been less checkered by shadows; for to know true joy one must taste deep sorrow. Even the Immaculate Heart of our Blessed Mother could never have so exulted in holy rapture on that first Easter Morn had she not stood on Calvary those three long hours.

After the evening shadows
Shineth the morning glow,
Those who shun the darkness
The glory may not know.

That our dear Mother General has not shunned the "darkness" we all know, hence, that at times there have been bright gleams of sunshine throughout her life we may well surmise; for aside from her optimistic spirit and habitual disposition to make the best of whatever the Lord sends, there have been particular days when her children's happiness would of itself afford her ample reason for rejoicing. Among these various occasions there stands out as we pen these pages two events which seem to us of special significance. They are:

The Twenty-fifth Anniversary of her election as Mother General, and The Golden Jubilee of her Religious Profession.

Sister Ludovica Keller was elected Mother General, March 26, 1882. The Twenty-fifth anniversary of this event, therefore, occurred during the Lenten season of

1907, and as a consequence its celebration was postponed until the glad vacation days, when its joys could be shared with the Mission Sisters, who fully entered into th spirit of the occasion and contributed their share towards making the day conspicuous among the many events recorded in the annals of our community. After a pleasing program rendered in the auditorium in the afternoon, His Lordship, Right Reverend James Schwebach spoke as follows:

"Reverend Mother, dear Daughters:

"Although I have offered my congratulations this morning, I cannot refrain from saying a word now. You are all happy to-day, and indeed justly so, on this the twenty-fifth anniversary of your Mother Superior's election. How good God has been to your community. You have been blest in so many ways! Ah, indeed, you have every reason to rejoice, for although twenty-five years have elapsed since her first election, you have your good, kind Mother Superior still with you and in good health, and to all appearances she will be with you for another twenty-five years and celebrate her golden jubilee. Without doubt many, very many of you will be present on that occasion. As for myself I cannot hope to be, though I should have no objection.

"As I have already remarked this morning, I rejoice at the good spirit which reigns in this community — that truly religious spirit which gives joy to your pious Superiors and of which I must say I feel justly proud. Under the wise leadership of your zealous Mother Superior, this community has prospered as, perhaps, no other community in the United States. I have observed you in your daily life, noted your relation with one another, and I have been edified by the harmony, the union, the charity, the sisterly affection always so manifest. All of the Sisters seem to be of one mind and one heart. Ah! this truly religious spirit is indeed in itself a very great blessing, and I am convinced that this is only one of the fruits of your love for Jesus in the Blessed Sacrament. My dear daughters, you have a little heaven here in your beautiful new chapel with

Jesus, the object of your love. There surrounded by the Apostles, the Prophets, the Doctors of the Church, the Virgins, the Angelic Choirs, and your founder, the Seraphic St. Francis, your hearts must leave this earth and rise heavenward. Not only during the hours of the day, but also through the silent watches of the night, you kneel before the Blessed Sacrament, thanking, petitioning and adoring. Truly, God could not fail to bless such devotion; and, indeed, He has blest it visibly. For twenty-five years your good, kind, pious, zealous, and devoted Superior has labored earnestly and successfully for the advancement of the community, and to-day you have all expressed your love, your reverence, your appreciation, and your gratitude for her motherly care and devotion; and you know, dear daughters, hers is a heavy burden, and I trust you will all do your best to render it as light as possible. For twenty-five years she has labored patiently, as the many improvements and the flourishing condition of the community prove. I know you will all endeavor to assist her by prayer that God may give her the strength and the patience to continue the noble work she has begun and carried on so successfully thus far.

"And now, Reverend Mother, I thank you, — I thank you for myself, and in the name of all the Sisters, for the good which after God has been accomplished through you and by you. I know the burden you bear is a heavy one, but I am sure you will always have the Sisters' heartiest co-operation. I had no intention of making a speech; I simply wished to congratulate you on this occasion. And now, I will give you my blessing, begging God that you may all live to see the fulfillment of the wishes expressed to-day, and that He may grant you all — the eternal joys of heaven."

But a brighter and fairer day was that which dawned upon St. Rose Convent, August 2, 1917. To understand its full significance we must recall an inspiring scene which transpired at St. Coletta Convent fifty years previous. There on August 2, 1867, eighteen devoted young hearts gave themselves unreservedly to their Divine Lover by the plighting of religious vows.

The term "fifty years" becomes a little more concrete

to us when we remember that of the many priests who assisted at that day's ceremonies each and all have been called to their eternal reward. Two of the Sisters, however, who that day made their Religious Profession were spared to celebrate this Golden Jubilee; namely, our Venerable Mother Ludovica and Sister Lidwina.

To make this occasion unique among the many celebrations held by the community in the past had been for months the cherished hope of all the Sisters. There was planned, long in advance, therefore, under the direction of our esteemed Mother Assistant, M. Seraphine, a three days' celebration.

The religious phase of a celebration, always of prime importance, had a special significance here as it was the only public demonstration connected with the occasion, hence, with the exception of the sermon delivered by his Lordship, we give here a complete program of the Chapel services:

PONTIFICAL HIGH MASS

Wednesday, 9:00 A. M., August the First

Celebrant: Right Reverend Bishop Schwebach, D.D.
Assistant Priest: Rev. P. Pape
Deacon of the Mass: Rev. A. Murphy
Sub-deacon of the Mass: Rev. J. Riesterer
Master of Ceremonies: Rev. K. G. Beyer
Assistant Deacons: Very Rev. G. Haxmeier, Rev. J. Walsh
Sermon: Right Reverend Bishop Schwebach, D.D.
Solemn Benediction
Te Deum

There were present in the sanctuary also: Right Reverend Monsignor Kremer, V.G.; Reverend W. Hackner, Reverend A. Biskupek, S.V.D.; Reverend M. Pollak.

MUSICAL PROGRAM

Holy Mass

Processional: Jubilee Hymn.....Strings and Organ
Missa "Nona".....B. Stein
Introit, Gradual, Offertory, Communion, Credo.....Gregorian

Solemn Benediction

O Quam Amabilis.....Singenberger
Tantum Ergo .....Liszt
Te Deum.....Gregorian
Recessional Hymn: "Die Kirche Christi".....Modlmayr

As the Sisters knelt in prayer, every niche and corner of our beautiful chapel seemed to catch, to echo and re-echo the soul-elevating music poured forth by the hundred-voiced choir; heaven's gates seemed to swing ajar and angel wings to flutter and vibrate in seraphic cadence. The light of heaven-born happiness illumined the face of every member of the community, and our good Bishop's fatherly countenance fairly beamed with pleasure as he offered his congratulations first to the Jubilarian, then to the entire Sisterhood, for well he understood that this was a day of jubilation for all the members without exception.

To make the event a family feast, pure and simple, was part of the original plan, and this feature was strictly adhered to. With the exception of the chapel services on the first morning, the celebration was "just among ourselves." Yet never did our Sister musicians prepare with greater zest for any celebration and never did the "Haec Dies," so beautifully rendered by them in the refectory before breakfast on the first day of the celebration, ring out more joyously. It had a special significance for all, and tears of joy coursed down the cheeks of many of the Sisters as they listened. At noon

and again at supper, our musicians assembled in the refectory and on each of the three days they stirred the hearts of all by the flood of melody which they poured forth. "Sextons unsurpassed in swinging Mother's Jubilee Bells" one Sister pronounced them. Mother Assistant was toast mistress, and the toasts well chosen and well delivered were enjoyed by all.

If these lines seem to suggest, however, that the Sisters, about four hundred in number, assembled at St. Rose subsisted on music and toasts during these three days we hasten to correct the impression, for this would be an injustice to those who spared no pains to make the Golden Jubilee banquet a splendid success. To this, St. Joseph's Ridge contributed from its broad acres more than its special share of the many good things furnished. And as for the Sisters in charge of the culinary department, appreciations of the daily work done by those Sisters intrusted with the management of domestic affairs at Home and on the Missions was expressed by one of the Sisters in a special toast to "Our Housekeepers" which she concluded thus:

"We can live without poetry, music and art;
We can live without conscience and live without heart;
We can live without friends and live without books;
But civilized man cannot live without cooks."

St. Joseph's Ridge was only one of the Missions represented on our Mother's Golden Jubilee; for each Mission House had some gift to offer and each was on the tiptoe of expectancy as to what might be the good thing presented by the other Missions. An exhibit consisting of these gifts of art and needlework, as beautiful as they were varied, was displayed in our audi-

CONVENT AND FARM SCENES AT ST. JOSEPH'S RIDGE, LA CROSSE, WIS.

torium. More valuable than any of these and more appreciated by our Mother than gold or precious stones were the spiritual offerings made in her behalf. Were space to permit, it would be a pleasure to describe here, the five beautiful books in which these offerings were recorded; yet to be appreciated they must be seen.

The celebration of our Mother's Golden Jubilee was brought to a fitting close on the evening of the third day. As appreciation was being expressed on all sides, our beloved Mother General arose and in her characteristic manner referred all the honor to the Triune God. Reverently bowing her head she devoutly intoned the "Gloria Patri" and fervently did the assembled Sisters respond: "Sicut erat in principio et nune et semper et in saecula saeculorum. Amen."

CHAPTER XXVIII

THE GOLDEN JUBILEE OF OUR BISHOP

That the Golden Jubilee of our beloved Bishop's ordination to the priesthood should be coincident with the Fiftieth Anniversary of the establishment of the Motherhouse of our Community in La Crosse is, to say the least, significant. Close, indeed, is the connection between his fifty priestly years and the history of St. Rose Convent. The echo of the sacred words of his ordination had scarcely died away when he assisted at the laying of the corner stone of our Convent, and delivered one of the two sermons given on that occasion.

As pastor of St. Mary's Church, La Crosse, Wisconsin, he evinced a fatherly interest in our community and in the Sisters who were placed in charge of his school; and when by appointment of our Holy Father, Leo XIII, he was made chief pastor of the La Crosse Diocese, he became, and has continued through all these many years to be, indeed, a kind father to every member of our Sisterhood, — a shepherd deeply interested in all that concerns the spiritual and material welfare of the community.

And now that golden bells ring out the story of his consecrated life, it is proper that we record here some of the prominent facts of his life's history, since these same facts may be likened to the major chords of the joyful jubilee strains.

Our Right Reverend Bishop was born at Platen in the Grand Duchy of Luxemburg on August 15, 1847. Two days later in the church of the Mother of God, parish of Bettbourn, he was regenerated by the saving

This Jubilee, your Golden
By grace and friendship blest;
May its cherished memories linger
As you near the longed-for rest,
May the Master's voice call sweetly
As you cross the Golden Sea,
"Come, Faithful One, and we shall keep
AN ENDLESS JUBILEE!"

RIGHT REV. JAMES SCHWEBACH, D. D.

waters of Baptism. Seemingly predesignated a child of Mary by his birth on her beautiful Feast of the Assumption, other special graces came to him also through our Blessed Mother's hands. On the first day of her beautiful month, 1859, he received his First Holy Communion, and on the Feast of her Nativity, 1860, he was made a soldier of Christ through the Sacrament of Confirmation.

Having finished his elementary studies, he entered the College at Diekirch, Luxemburg. In the spring of 1864, at the age of seventeen, we find him at St. Francis Seminary, Milwaukee. Among his professors there were two who later became his predecessors in the See of La Crosse: our venerated Founder, the Most Reverend M. Heiss, and Right Reverend K. C. Flasch. Being too young for the priesthood on the completion of his course in philosophy and theology at St. Francis, he was ordained deacon on July 24, 1869. In this capacity he officiated at St. Mary's Church in our own city of La Crosse, preaching in English, German, and French, and instructing the school children in the Christian Doctrine until his ordination to the priesthood on June 16, 1870, by the Right Reverend T. L. Grace.

Reverend James Schwebach was then appointed Rector of St. Mary's Parish, and for nearly a quarter of a century did he labor faithfully among the Catholics of La Crosse, administering for a number of years to the spiritual needs of St. James' Congregation on the North Side in addition to his duties as pastor of St. Mary's on the South Side. When by the death of Bishop Flasch the See of La Crosse was left vacant, it was a matter of great rejoicing for the Catholics of La Crosse to have the worthy and beloved Father Schwebach elevated to the Episcopate, February 25,

1892; and though the members of St. Mary's Parish regretted the loss of their good pastor, they were elated over the great honor conferred upon him.

The annals of St. Rose Convent record the celebration of three special days in our Right Reverend Bishop's priestly years:

The Twenty-fifth Anniversary of His Ordination, June 16, 1895;

The Silver Jubilee of His Consecration, February 25, 1917;

His Sacerdotal Golden Jubilee, June 16, 1920.

This last event was marked by four distinct celebrations. June 7 witnessed the assembling of all the Parochial School children of La Crosse, some fifteen hundred in number, in Myrick Park, where they greeted the Bishop with songs and congratulations and presented him with a Spiritual Bouquet. This gathering of the tender ones of his fold so rejoiced the heart of our dear Bishop, whose special love for children is well known, that he spent almost the entire day in the park with them.

It seemed but proper that the Sisters should be among the first to greet His Lordship on this Golden Anniversary, hence, June 10 was set apart for the celebration of the joyful event at St. Rose Convent. As if to add to the joys in store for the day, our chapel of Maria Angelorum was never more resplendent, not even on the day of its consecration. For several months it had been undergoing renovation, even the large oil paintings in the sanctuary having been retouched. During this time Holy Mass had been offered in the basement chapel, and though it had been planned to have the chapel proper ready for use on the beautiful Feast of Corpus Christi, Providence willed that our Right Reverend Bishop's Golden Jubilee should be

the first celebration held within its renovated walls. On the morning of June 10, His Lordship offered Holy Mass at half past seven o'clock. In the evening the Sisters assembled in the auditorium to offer their good wishes and congratulations. The following program was well rendered:

Jubilee Overture: Orchestral Ensemble.....Weber
What Golden Bells Are Telling.....
Tribute of Roses
The Dream of Gerontius, Dramatized.....Cardinal Newman
God is My Shepherd.....Choral Ensemble
Psalm XXII Paraphrased

Prominent among the stage decorations was a sheaf of fine wheat, the golden heads emblematic of the long, well filled years of the esteemed Jubilarian's priestly life, — suggestive, too, of the harvest of souls he has gathered for Heaven.

"What Golden Bells are Telling" reviewed in verse the chief events in our Right Reverend Bishop's life. He was deeply affected by this number and tears filled his eyes.

The Floral Tribute consisted of a large basket filled with beautiful roses. To the handle was attached a bow of white ribbon, on the long streamers of which the Spiritual Offering of the Sisters was printed. As our Right Reverend Bishop gazed upon the lovely, fragrant roses, he expressed his regret that they must fade and die, but on reading the Spiritual Offering he fervently exclaimed, "This will last forever, I feel as if all these Holy Masses, Communions, and Prayers, lift me almost bodily to Heaven."

As the final notes of the last chorus died away, our good Bishop seemed lost in recollections of the past

and so overcome by deep emotion was he, that he found it impossible to address the audience. Later he expressed his great appreciation of the program and especially of the Spiritual Offering.

The actual Fiftieth Anniversary, June 16, of Right Reverend Bishop's ordination to the priesthood brought to the city of La Crosse two hundred and fifty priests, several monsignors, six bishops, and two archbishops. The celebration began with Pontifical High Mass offered by the Venerable Jubilarian at St. Joseph's Cathedral. Archbishop Messmer of Milwaukee delivered a sermon on "The Mission and Privileges of the Priesthood." The banquet was held at the Chamber of Commerce. Right Reverend Monsignor A. Ph. Kremer acted as toastmaster. Right Reverend J. Schrembs of Toledo, Ohio, delivered an inspiring tribute to "Our Holy Father." Right Reverend Bishop Muldoon of Rockford, Illinois, responded to the toast "Our Country;" and Reverend R. B. Condon, Ph.D., pastor of St. Mary's Church, La Crosse, at which the Jubilarian was pastor for many years, spoke of "The Jubilarian." Each address was a masterpiece of eloquence and aroused general enthusiasm. The love and esteem for Bishop Schwebach broke forth in spontaneous outbursts and found expression in three ringing cheers.

In the evening, there was a mass meeting of the laity arranged by the Knights of Columbus, at which Nicholas Gonner of Dubuque delivered the address. Lawyer Doherty of the city also gave a speech in his usual masterful way. The non-Catholics of the city had present a representative eulogizing the Bishop for his valuable assistance in all civic enterprises that promote the best interests of La Crosse. After the speeches there

was a public reception at which the Bishop met those present individually, receiving their congratulations and best wishes for the occasion.

The fourth event held in connection with this Golden Celebration was a reunion of the Bishop's relatives on Sunday June 20, at Caledonia, Minnesota, where His Lordship's parents resided for many years and where he himself spent many happy days. Again, as at La Crosse, a Pontifical Mass was celebrated at which a large number of clergy and laity were present including eighty of the Bishop's relatives.

We feel that in this chapter we have in nowise done justice to the noble character of our good Bishop and, hence, we here add a few paragraphs from an article written by the Right Reverend Monsignor A. Ph. Kremer on the occasion of Right Reverend Bishop Schwebach's Golden Jubilee at the request of the Dubuque Catholic Tribune. He emphasized in particular his three special characteristic traits: his respect for the rights of others, his reluctance to inflict pain, and his willingness to help others.

"HIS RESPECT FOR THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS.

"The man who thinks of the rights of others first is the exceptional man, and such a man is Bishop Schwebach. The humblest Catholic in the smallest mission of the Diocese as well as the pastor of the largest parish has his rights, which in the eyes of our Bishop are sacred and must be respected. No decision is made but these rights are previously weighed and carefully balanced.

"HIS RELUCTANCE TO INFLICT PAIN.

"There is no conscientious superior but will some time or other have to give pain; no physician can spare his patients suffering at all times. How many of us can say, however, that we

have never inflicted pain on others rather to relieve our own feelings than to remedy an evil in others? Too seldom we think of the feelings of those who fortunately have incurred our displeasure, too rarely we spare them. Not so Bishop Schwebach. His feelings under trying circumstances are ever those of sorrow rather than of anger. He will not, it is true, 'mince matters'; his words are clear and direct, but both his mode of reasoning and the inflection of his voice indicate his motive to be one of justice and compassion rather than of vindictiveness.

"HIS WILLINGNESS TO HELP ALL.

"I have never met a person more willing to help others than Bishop Schwebach; he is always ready to give what is asked, if he has it in his power to do so. He is as ready to make personal sacrifices for the benefit of others as he is to grant favors which involve no sacrifice on his part. One who has assisted as many people in positions, both high and low, as Bishop Schwebach has done, must be happy in the thought that he has contributed more to the sum of human happiness than most of those whose names are printed in large letters on the front pages of our newspapers. But even a bishop's means of helping are limited. Does the joy of giving counterbalance the pain of being obliged to refuse? Do they whose wishes have not been granted by the Bishop realize that his 'no' caused him more suffering and more heartache than they themselves experienced? No petition of whatever nature is ever brought to the Bishop's notice, but receives immediate and careful attention. If it can be granted, no one can grant more eagerly. If it must be refused, no one will do so more reluctantly than he. Bishop Schwebach's eagerness to help, like mercy

> '* * * is not strained;
> It droppeth like the gentle rain from heaven
> Upon the place beneath; it is twice blessed;
> It blesseth him that gives and him that takes.'"

Even as we pen the last pages of this volume, good wishes and hearty congratulations are still being showered upon our esteemed Jubilarian by numerous

relatives and a host of friends including clergy and laity. But the crowning of these Golden Festivities came to our Right Reverend Bishop, we feel, in the form of a letter from His Holiness. To seek a more fitting conclusion for this chapter than the words of our Holy Father would be presumptuous; hence, we give here a translation of the letter in full:

To Our Venerable Brother JAMES,

Bishop of La Crosse.

BENEDICT XV, POPE.

Venerable Brother—Health and Apostolic Benediction.

Since We have learned that the anniversary of the day on which fifty years ago you offered the first fruits of your priesthood to God, will soon return, We wish to share and to crown the expressions of joy coming from your children. For, although a fair and just reward for the good done can be expected from God alone, We have always believed that he who is deserving should be honored with due acknowledgment of his merits. Most ardently, therefore, do We desire to express to you Our heartfelt congratulations first upon the ardor of your charity, especially towards the orphans, and also upon the devotion and fidelity you have ever observed toward the Holy See.

We embrace you, therefore, with the fatherly affection of which you are worthy, and, while wishing you all that is good, We pray that God may deign to preserve for a long time to come so able and so industrious a shepherd to the Church of La Crosse. In order that you may not wish in vain for a token of what is in Our heart on this gladsome occasion, We cheerfully grant, that after you have celebrated Holy Mass on that joyful day, you may bless those present in Our name, and impart to them a PLENARY INDULGENCE to be gained under the usual conditions; and may the Apostolic Benediction which We most lovingly bestow on you, the entire clergy, and the people entrusted to your diligent care, be a source of heavenly gifts.

Given in Rome at St. Peter's on the 29th day of April, 1920, in the sixth year of Our Pontificate.

BENEDICT XV, POPE.

CONCLUSION

It is with mingled feelings of sadness and joy, of hope and gratitude that we close these pages: a feeling of sadness is ours at the thought that the majority of those who have figured in the scenes here described are no longer with us. To some of them it was not given to see their life's fondest hope realized. Others who have enjoyed the realization of this great privilege, who have shared our Eucharistic watches, have gone to continue their Perpetual Adoration in that blessed dwelling not made by hands. We have with us to-day only three of those who greeted the God of the Tabernacles on His first advent among us in Jefferson, 1865. They are our beloved Mother General, M. Ludovica, Sister Agnes, and Sister Michaela. But deeply impressed upon our very souls are the memories of the little lard light, and strong is our conviction that while we keep unbroken the Perpetual Adoration begun more than forty years ago, we shall always have in our midst a mystic ladder of grace on which angels ascending and descending carry our prayers to the Lamb on High, and return laden with richest gifts and graces. Unshaken is our confidence that

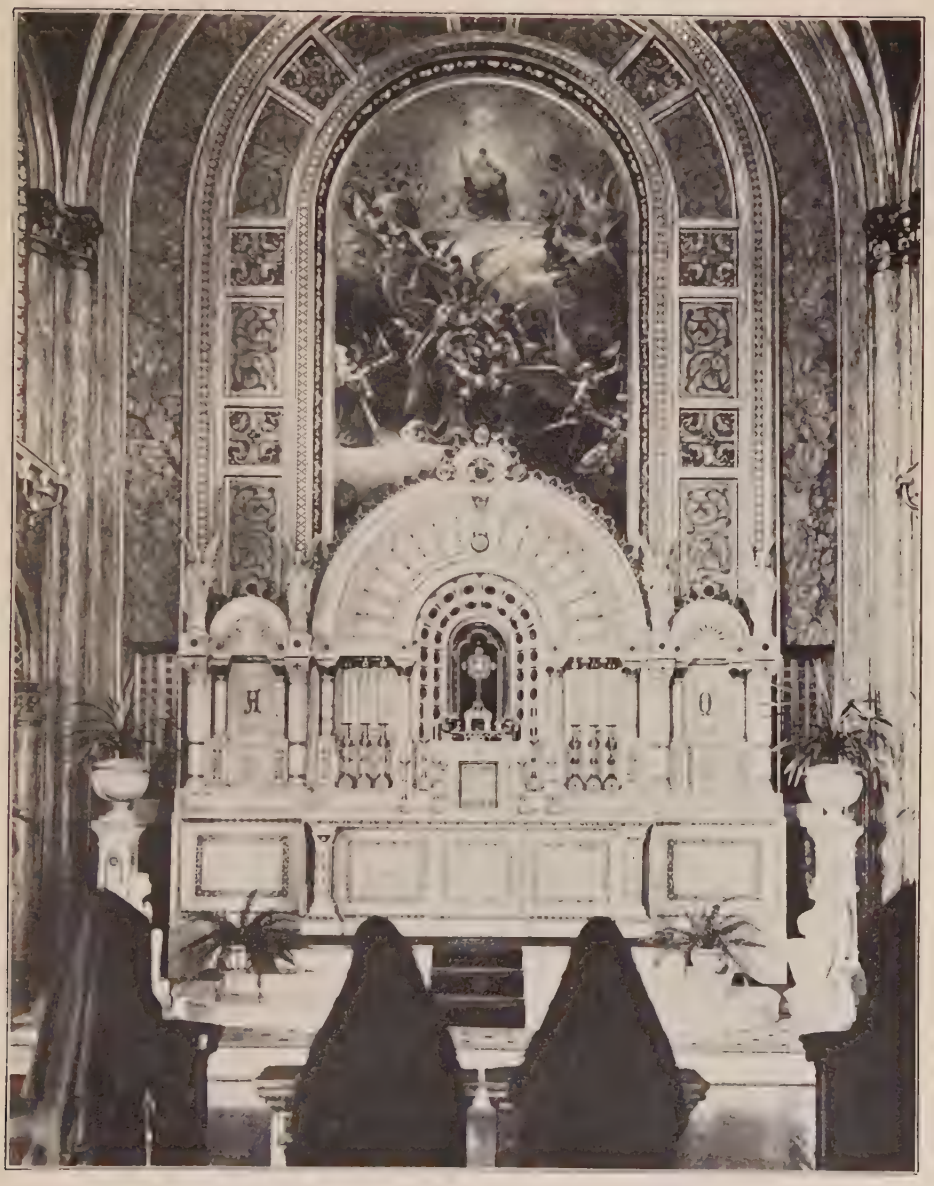
> In eternal thanksgiving all take part
> Who pierced the Eucharistic veil — so frail —
> Crying, "Dominus est," with faith that did not fail.

And now on this the Golden Anniversary of the establishment of our Motherhouse, St. Rose Convent, let our watchword be "Sursum Corda;" our rapturous "Te Deum" reach the heavenly throne; our grateful hearts break forth in hymns of praise. To-day and every day of our lives let us with our heavenly Mother

acknowledge that He Who is mighty hath done great things for our community. Like Mary's, our life should be an uninterrupted "Magnificat." With Mary, we shall hasten in joy and in sorrow to our Blessed Savior's feet in the Sacrament of His Love. There, during the fleeting hours of the busy day, during the long hours of the silent night, our joys shall be sweetened, the burden of our sorrows and cares lifted or lightened. There, when our faith is animated and consoling, and we seem borne heavenward by the high tide of grace, we shall say with Peter: "Lord, it is good for us to be here!" There, too, when within and without all seems dark and the heavens as stone, we shall either find new joy or taste true consolation in repeating with our Seraphic Father, "My God and my All!"

When skies are blue and skies are gray,
To-day and ever we shall pray;
"O Sacrament Most Holy, O Sacrament Divine,
All praise and all thanksgiving be every moment Thine."

May we ever say with renewed fervor and burning love the prayer recited at the close of every Hour of Adoration, and the God of the Eucharist will—***enkindle our hearts and grant that our community may be a perpetual holocaust immolated for the glory of His Most Holy Sacrament!***



ALTAR OF PERPETUAL ADORATION

LEO PP. XIII.

Ad perpetuam rei memoriam. Cum, sicuti relatum est Nobis Certi Ordinis SS. Francisci Seraphici Congregatio canonice, ut asseritur, Crossarie in Ecclesia S. Antonii existat, et eiusdem Sorores de Ordinario consensu perpetuam Missæ Eucharisticæ Sacrae memoriæ adorationem fundaverint: Nos quo pia huiusmodi Congregatio maiora in dies susceptæ incrementa, de Omnipotentis Dei misericordia, ac BB. Petri, et Pauli Apostolorum eius auctoritate confisi, omnibus, et singulis nunc, et pro tempore existentibus, utriusque eiusdem Congregationis Consororibus vere pœnitentibus, et confessis, ac S. Communione refectis, quæ quatuor per annum dies ab Ordinario semel tantum designandis per eiusdem Congregationis Ecclesiam a primis vesperis usque ad occasum solis dictorum cum consensu, ac S. Matteis Ecclesiæ exaltatione pias ad Deum preces effuderint, quo die præfatorum id egerint, Pœnitentiam omnium peccatorum suorum indulgentiam, et remissionem, etiam animabus fidelium, quæ purgatorio detentæ per modum suffragii applicabilem misericorditer in Domino concedimus. In cuius rei fidem has nostras quibus communes Præsentibus perpetuis futuris temporibus valituris. Datum Romæ apud S. Petrum sub annulo Piscatoris die VIII Decembris M D C C C L X X X I I I Pontificatus Nostri Anno Sexto.

Pro D. Card. Laur. Mazzella
A. Tronchini Substit.

Ad quam indulgentiam plenariam lucrandam quatuor per annum dies ex feriis quintis quae mense Julio occurrent, secundam et tertiam, ex feriis quintis vero mensis Augusti primam et secundam hisce designamus. –

+ Ritius C. Flasch, Ep. Cron.

PLENARY INDULGENCE GRANTED FOUR TIMES EACH YEAR
BY HIS HOLINESS, LEO XIII

"Granted in perpetuity.

"Since, as We have been informed, a Congregation of Sisters of the Third Order of St. Francis canonically established, as is asserted, exists in the city of La Crosse and that the Sisters of the same Congregation have founded with the consent of the ordinary a perpetual adoration of the Most Holy Sacrament of the Eucharist: We, through the mercy of Almighty God and relying on the authority of His Apostles, Blessed Peter and Paul, in order that this pious Congregation may obtain ever increasing merit, grant mercifully in the Lord to all and each of the Sisters now present or hereafter existing in the same pious Congregation, who, being truly penitent, having confessed and communicated, within the year on the four days designated by the ordinary, shall have at least once devoutly visited between the first vespers and sunset of these days each year a church belonging to the same Congregation and there shall have offered to God devout prayers for concord among Christian Princes, the extirpation of heresy, the conversion of sinners and the exaltation of Holy Mother Church, a Plenary Indulgence and the remission of all their sins, on the day on which they shall have fulfilled these conditions, applicable, also, by way of suffrage, to the souls of the faithful detained in purgatory. All things whatsoever to the contrary nothwithstanding. This Indulgence to be valid in perpetuity.

"Given at Rome in St. Peter's under the seal of the Fisherman, December 7, 1883, the sixth year of Our Pontificate.

(Seal)

"For LORD CARDINAL MERTEL,
"A. Trinchieri, Sub.-Sec'y."

We designate the second and the third Thursday in July, and the first and the second Thursday in August as the four days during the year on which this Plenary Indulgence is to be gained.

KILIAN C. FLASCH,
Episc. Cross.

Later, the Right Reverend Bishop, being authorized by a decree from Rome, appointed, instead of the above days, the third and the fourth Sunday in July, and the first and the second Sunday in August.